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Pathetic Politics: An Analysis Of Emotion And Embodiment In First Lady Rhetoric

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**PATHETIC POLITICS: AN ANALYSIS OF EMOTION AND EMBODIMENT IN
FIRST LADY RHETORIC**

by

STEPHANIE L. WIDEMAN

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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Advisor

Date

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DEDICATION

I borrow from Kenneth Burke to dedicate this project

to my family: Kimberly & Pat Wilson, Don & Sharon Wideman, Andrew Wideman, and

Jeffrey Wideman, "without whom not."

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Undertaking a project of this magnitude is never done without good people constantly reminding you what you have already accomplished, who you are, and everything that you can be with some hard work and dedication. First, I want to thank my first teacher and fiercest advocate, my mother. One of her greatest lessons to me was the importance of education. In this lesson she didn't just talk the talk; she walked great distances in securing education opportunities for her and her family. When I had difficulty in a high school geometry class, she showed up on her lunch break to tutor me. When I had pre-final nerves, she taught me to trust the process and trust myself. When I told her I wanted to move to Detroit to pursue my Ph.D., she and her husband showed up to help me pack and traveled the distance to get me settled. Thank you mom, for seeing things in me I didn't always see. Moreover, thank you for helping me believe that this is who I am supposed to be. I want to thank my entire family for their boundless love and support during this process.

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INTRODUCTION

On November 8, 2016, after a long and particularly contentious presidential general election, Donald J. Trump claimed victory over his opponent Hillary Rodham Clinton. Although Clinton took the popular vote by over 3 million votes, Trump claimed the electoral vote by unexpected gains made primarily in the Rust Belt of America. The surprise of Trump's win sent shock waves out from Washington D.C. as it challenged much of what we thought we knew about political campaigning, the presidency, and rhetoric. Throughout the campaign a vast majority of political polls predicted an almost certain victory for Clinton. Patrick Murray, Director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute lamented, "The polls were largely bad, including mine. But if anyone thinks they have the answer right now, they are just guessing," (Bialik & Enton, 2016). Political analysts and media commentators found themselves trying to explain on live television how a man that had engaged in often divisive and problematic rhetoric was just elected the President of the United States. CNN analyst Van Jones offered a particularly emotion filled election analysis:

You tell your kids don't be a bully, you tell your kids don't be a bigot...and then you have this outcome. You have people putting children to bed tonight and they are afraid of breakfast. They're afraid of 'How do I explain this to my children?'" (Ryan, 2016)

Across the nation many were asking the same question, what did we get wrong? What are we missing in this election? All signs seem to point to a phenomenon which data has a notoriously difficult time representing, emotion. "Supporters and opponents became the media themselves, spreading and amplifying subjective and emotional affective news-news designed to provoke passion, not inform," (Hermida, 2016).

Hermida further opined that changes in the nature and role of media produced a “circular environment where emotion often overrides evidence, fueling the rise of polarized, passionate, and personalized streams of information,” (2016). Unfortunately for Clinton, this acceleration of emotion served to motivate Trump’s voter base with a ferocity that was not mirrored in her own voter turnout efforts:

While polling data correctly predicted the popular vote win for Clinton, it failed to make the more nuanced call that anger among working class white voters ran deep, and would drive them to the polls in larger numbers than the lukewarm Clinton supporters in the Democratic base. (Carpenter, 2016)

This sentiment was not without precedent before the election. Some argued that the political landscape in America is similar to the one in the United Kingdom that recently prompted people to vote to exit the European Union:

The 2016 presidential election is more like the Brexit vote in many ways than it is like prior presidential elections. Both Brexit and this presidential election involved raw emotion, populism, anger, nationalism, class division, and other factors that distort accuracy in polling. (Dershowitz, 2016)

Although Trump’s election may have been born of populist anger, his accession to the presidency did not serve to vanquish that emotion from the American electorate. Instead, it mobilized dissent over the outcome of the election.

Donald J Trump became 45th President of the United States when he was sworn into office on January 20, 2017. The day after, on January 21, 2017, opponents of Trump’s victory revealed their own emotions as millions of protesters marched across the world in a coordinated effort called the Women’s March on Washington. The protesters

were reportedly were acting out of “outrage and despair” at the results of the election of a man many believe to be a misogynist:

In Manhattan, Fifth Avenue became a tide of signs and symbolic pink hats, while in downtown Los Angeles, shouts of ‘love trumps hate’ echoed along a one-mile route leading to City Hall, with many demonstrators spilling over into adjacent streets in a huge, festival-like atmosphere. (Chira & Alcindor, 2017)

Since that day of protest, emotions have not subsided for Trump supporters or detractors. In the aftermath of the Women’s March, Trump supporters have managed to mobilize scattered rallies of support for the President’s initiatives. Organizers for the Women’s March have waged numerous attempts to translate the march’s mobilization into a national women’s strike as well as numerous campaigns to contact elected representatives in opposition to Trump.

These are indeed emotional times, but that in and of itself is not the problem. Instead, the problem lies in the logos-centric fear invoked by labeling a period emotional. It triggers alarmist fears that pathos has staged a coup, rationality has left the country, and the demolition of democracy is nigh. Fear of an emotional electorate is not limited to the media and political analysts; instead its history is seeped in the very structure of our society. This work argues that this phobia puts rhetorical theorists at a disadvantage because it led to the underdevelopment of pathetic theory. Subsequently, in the aftermath of elections like the one in 2016 that left the electorate in a highly emotional state, analysts are at a loss to understand what happened and what could happen next.

There are currently grounds to claim that a lot of people don’t really care about rational, logical arguments in our political sphere. In a country where our democratic

system of government is based on the premise that the most logical argument will eventually win out, this poses a significant problem. What is needed now is productive reflection and this work suggests we begin with a basic tenet of rhetorical theory, pathos.

Rhetoric and Presidential Studies

In 2010 Mary Stuckey argued:

I want to suggest that those of us who work in the areas of presidential rhetoric and the rhetorical presidency are fast approaching the point where we need less codification and more new thinking; we need fewer case studies that illustrate principles we already acknowledge and more work that challenges our understanding. (p. 39)

In an attempt to answer this call, I look to the Office of the First Lady (OFL) to identify the way in which the rhetorical presidency should be expanded to include additional actors that can help satiate the populace's craving for emotion. I aim to reveal that much of the potential to access the political capital and influence of the first lady is rooted in pathetic dimensions derived primarily from the imagery that surrounds the tension between her private and political roles in the public sphere. But when pathos is considered to play a greater role in the public, the powers of the president and the first lady appear more intertwined. I argue that the president has the power to speak about American life in front of the public, but the first lady is uniquely positioned to embody the power to live the American life in front of the public.

Therefore the central question is not whether the OFL has power, but through what rhetorical means can the OFL utilize it, regardless of the patriarchal insecurities that have traditionally been suspicious of this possibility. More specifically, these criticisms illustrate the pervasive fear that the rationalized, masculine, logos-centered Office of the

President may be defiled or contaminated by the emotional, pathetic nature of the Office of the First Lady. Setting these concerns aside raises the question, “What are we missing when we evaluate the Office of the First Lady through only her logo-centric connection to power and influence and marginalize the pathetic appeal of her political discourse?” To engage this question, I propose to examine the rhetorical role that Michelle Obama has enacted during the Obama Administration.

Chapter Discussion

In the first chapter I chart the evolution of logos and the parallel devolution of pathos stemming from pre-Aristotelian times. In addition, I explore the cultural and technological changes that have brought visibility and the body to the forefront of our political understandings. In the second chapter I establish the foundation for my comparison of the primarily verbal, logos-centric political argumentation, and the primarily visual, pathetic political argumentation. In this effort, I look to Aristotle’s original conception of rhetorical proofs ethos, logos, and pathos to suggest an alternative interpretation for the role of pathos in rhetoric.

In the third chapter I seek the source of pathetic power by bringing Hariman’s theories of political style into conversation with Foucault’s concept of bio-power. This comparison is then used to examine the way in which First Lady Michelle Obama utilizes her proximity to the president as a form of power invested in her own body.

In the fourth chapter I will seek to understand the way in which the physical body of the First Lady Michelle Obama has operated as a site for contestation of political argument. In order to explore this perspective I will employ a visual analysis to “read”

Michelle Obama's body for what it reveals and what it hides from our public understanding of the requirements of modern citizenship. In this analysis I will turn to images of the first lady as disseminated by the White House, the Associated Press, and Reuters. Focusing on the first lady and the way in which her body has been inspected and dissected by the media offers a comparison to the President in that these types of representation were not prevalent in his campaign for the nation's health.

In Chapter Five, I aim to show what we are missing without a concept of pathetic politics in our rhetorical toolkit. Embodiment and episteme are explored as tools of citizenship and democracy as displayed through the rhetoric of Michelle Obama acting as a political surrogate for presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. I conclude with commentary on implications for rhetorical studies as well as notes for future research.

CHAPTER 1 THE RHETORICITY OF RHETORICAL PROOFS

In their study of the utilization of political imagery on television, Grabe and Bucy (2009) argued, “granting visuals their deserved status as reliable forms of political information requires somewhat of a paradigm shift in thinking about television news and democracy (p. vii).” Essentially, they explained, this paradigm shift requires a reconsideration of theoretical stances that define the rational purely in terms of logos and so preclude an understanding of emotional response in political decision-making. Investigations of the power of these pathetic appeals are relatively new phenomena that have recently been recognized in professional avenues like advertising. For example, in 2014 Rossolatos explained, “One of the key reasons that have been put forward for justifying the superior argumentative force of visuals over verbal arguments in advertising discourse is their immediacy,” (p. 1). While Rossolatos engages in an unnecessary hierarchical argument between the verbal and the visual, his primary point represents well the growing appreciation for pathos and the visual in the fields connected to rhetoric. Studies like this one have the effect of changing the context in which pathetic appeals operate. Traditional means of argumentation have been stymied by theoretical paradigms based on the enlightenment’s dream of a purely “rational man,” despite recent rhetorical scholarship that reveals this ‘dream’ is limiting in both theory and practice.

Conventionally, logos is prized in western societies because of its presumed relevance for aiding democratic decision-making. The idea that emotional decision-making can be helpful to a democratic society, because it has the potential to promote engagement and interaction among the citizenry, defies the logos-centered conception of

public discourse. This reversal requires a dismissal of the idea that rationality in public discourse exists solely through the use of logos.

This paradigm shift allows for exploration of this process through analysis of image systems. Examination of the theoretical, practical, and legal conceptions of citizenship in the United States reveals the way in which aesthetics serve to activate modes of citizenship among the populace. Asen (2004) follows Dewey in his discourse theory of citizenship by arguing, “Creative, aesthetic uses of communication promise to reconnect people to public affairs and to each other” (p. 197). Further, scholars like Allen (2004) insist that the very creation of “the people” is a process of imagination and imagery, “‘The people’ exists only in the imaginations of democratic citizens who must think themselves into this body in order to believe that they act through it. Democratic politics cannot take shape until ‘the people’ is imaginable” (p. 69). Hariman and Lucaties’s (2007) work on imagery employs this assumption in their study of iconic photographs as a mechanism of democracy. Through the collective act of looking at such photographs, the individual citizens “imagine” themselves as a community. The potential for visuals to create and constrain political affiliations is rooted in the inherent affective power of the image.

For scholars like Hariman, Lucatites, and Mitchell, this theoretical investigation of visual rhetoric illustrates the pursuit of reconnecting the emotional and the visceral to our social discourse and argumentation. Hariman and Lucatites note the timeliness of visual investigation, “the study of various practices of visual representation is booming, so much so that it seems similar in scope to the ‘linguistic turn’ that expanded across human

sciences in the twentieth century” (2007, p. 5). Mitchell argues that pictures “have always been with us” and in fact we cannot get beyond them or the emotional elements that they engage (2005, p. xiv). Mitchell explains that the “pictorial turn” does not mean that images will replace words. Instead, he argues that the turn should allow us to understand how pictures and imagery work in conjunction with words in the effort of world-making. Mitchell writes: “We do not live in a uniquely visual era. The ‘visual or ‘pictorial turn’ is a recurrent trope that displaces moral and political panic onto images and so-called visual media” (p. 343). Essentially, the ‘moral’ panic that iconoclasts fear from visuals is rooted in a widespread fear of emotional appeals as antithetical to productive and democratic discourse. However, within the realm of citizenship studies it is becoming more difficult to ignore the emotional impact of visuals and imagery.

In this project I look to Fortier’s definition of affective citizenship which is based on the argument that affect, more generally described as emotional appeals that are supported only (or primarily by) affect, is a real and relevant way in which the citizenry makes political decisions and develops. While a good deal of recent work analyzes distinctions between affect and emotion, I take a more macro view that looks at affect on a general level that emphasizes its link with pathos. Throughout my investigation in this project, this position, allows me to examine the intersections between pathos, visual imagery, and the construction of citizenship. Further, it positions me to draw from the competing narratives of logos and pathos and examine their tensions, rather than becoming entrenched in theoretical arguments directly defining pathos.

To illustrate this tension, I provide a brief synopsis of logos' rise to dominance in western societies and pathos' concomitant denigration. The first is the narrative of a citizen constructed and motivated through purely logos-centric, rationalized discourse. The second is a story that recognizes and appreciates the pathetic potential for investigation into the motivations and affiliations of the citizenry.

The Adventures of Logos and Pathos

“Within Western culture, McKerrow (1998) explains, the dichotomy between reason and emotion has a long and deeply ingrained history” (Miller & McKerrow, 2001, p. 43). Dominant Western philosophies have treated reason as the absence of emotion and vice versa. The current negative connotation of the term “pathetic” is representative of mainstream aversion to the concept and utilization of pathos. The etymology of the word pathetic reveals that the term originally had a much more positive connotation and acquired the negative valence much later. The Greek word pathētikos meaning “sensitive,” evolved by the 16th century to mean, “affecting the emotions” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013).

In Plato's work, *The Republic*, he went to great length to separate emotion from reason, going so far as to accuse emotion as capable of corrupting reason. For his part, Aristotle offered a nuanced, if hesitant, defense of pathos by recognizing it as a rhetorical proof alongside logos and ethos, thus suggesting that pathos has substantive value. However, throughout his work in *On Rhetoric* as well as his relegation of much of his investigation of pathos to drama in *Poetics*, he ended up lending suspicion to pathos as separate from logos in its legitimacy. This suspicion gained steam in the reign of the

Enlightenment when philosophers sought means to disempower the church by prioritizing logos over the faith that was the foundation of the church's power. This evolution of meaning coincides with the preference for the concept of man as primarily a rational creature. The denigration of pathos within reasoned thought continued until it came to indicate inadequacy or arousing of pity.

The journey through which the rhetorical proof of logos managed to discredit the rhetorical proof of pathos has an arch that spans over twenty-six hundred years. This particular narrative has had implications throughout a range of scholarly endeavors, most notably rhetoric, philosophy, political science, and economics. Although this narrative is chronologically expansive in both scope and depth, historical analysis is key to a contemporary understanding of these concepts.

The first of these relates to Plato's (in)famous critique of the Sophists as relying on ornamentation and false guarantees of eloquence to leading members of Ancient Greece in order to ingratiate themselves with power (Plato, 2009). Plato's critique stemmed from his conception of the relation between idea and object as illustrated in his devotion to his ontologically driven "Theory of Forms." Through his philosophical perspective, Plato would produce a series of famous dialogues that worked to discredit the need for pathos in intellectual and civic life. These dialogues primarily took on the form of Plato voicing the protagonist, Socrates, as he sets off on voyages that cross paths with Sophists. Socrates takes on the role of the proverbial gadfly in that he wages a series of questions challenging Sophists to defend their position on rhetoric. Ultimately, this method results in the Sophists in the dialogues contradicting and questioning themselves,

reaffirming Plato's critique of rhetoric as unnecessary ornamentation that distorts logos and rationality¹.

Although Sophistry persisted as a trade, Plato's dialogues created damage to the reputation of the profession and philosophical perspective. It was not until a student of Plato's, Aristotle, offered his work in *On Rhetoric* in which he declared rhetoric a counterpart or handmaiden of the dialectic, (Aristotle, 2004). Aristotle sought to find the median point between Sophistic practice and Platonic thought by locating pathos among the rhetorical proofs. As "the counterpart of dialectic," rhetoric operates in the space beyond the pure logic of dialectical reasoning. Aristotle identified three artistic proofs in rhetoric: ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logic or words). Aristotle defined pathos as "all those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgments, and that are also attended by pain or pleasure" (1378a). However, Aristotle's attempt to identify a middle ground between the philosophies of Plato and the Sophists was weakened by an account of emotion that lacked depth and scope. It was his extensive attention to logos and its rhetorical devices that led philosophers to argue Aristotle gave preference to logos over pathos in his conception of persuasion.

While the logos-centric narrative was initially popularized in Ancient Greece through the works of Plato, the logos-centric 'hammer' that would denigrate the role of pathos would not drop until the Enlightenment. This period of 'enlightenment' was characterized by rapid intellectual growth in the western world and so the shift to a

¹ Despite Plato's criticism of rhetoric, he turns to myth (noble lie) in *Republic* as a tool for guardians to maintain social harmony.

dominant status for logos became built-in to much of the ontological and epistemological positions, inherent to the rise of interest in science, that remain prevalent in our society to this day. The logos-centric paradigm demanded that our “proper” forms of formal argument be acquired through an elite education that was accessible to few in society.

The period gained its prominence in France, but quickly spread across the Western world. Members of the Enlightenment pondered ontologically driven questions, dealing with the nature of being, similar to the preceding work of Plato in *The Republic*, in that they sought the “essence” of man as a means for understanding how man should be governed. Prominent amongst the members of the Enlightenment was the work of John Locke; a political philosopher who’s had well known and profound influence on the future founding fathers of the United States. Like Plato, Locke argued that rationality or reason formed the “essence” of man, as it differentiated humans from animals. For Locke, reason was intimately connected to the concept of logos in that both center on the capacity of the mind to act as an “eye” in the pursuit of truth by assessing and connecting ideas through an “accurate” perception. In essence, Weedon (1970) reports that Locke argued for a conception of mental processes akin to mathematical processing (p. 386). The ideas of Locke and his contemporaries would be codified into the philosophies of law and economics through the construction of future constitutions of countries like France, as well as in economic systems of western countries dedicated to the principles of capitalism.

Rhetoric would also be influenced by this wave of rationality, particularly with respect to the practice of argumentation and its relation to democracy. The value that a

society has placed on logos is particularly salient when considering the communicative means through which democratic governments have been constructed, particularly in the examination of debate as a means of democracy. This value is readily seen in the construction of theories related to the role of public discourse in supporting democracy that preference logos as the foundation for rational decision-making. Traditional theorists of argumentation have insisted on a preference for logos in delineating “productive” means of argumentation, and by extension logos became preferred as the primary means for representation and inclusion in the public sphere.

Argumentation studies have flourished alongside democratic ideals since ancient Greek times. In an ideal democracy, citizens are civically engaged in public deliberation about their common concerns. People advance rational arguments to solve problems and sustain democratic governance (Aguayo & Steffensmeier, 2008, p. 1).

The presumption of rationality among men led to a restriction on women in politics as well a modern day fascination with the concept of form in argumentation. Following this trend Miller & McKerrow (2001) explained that emotions have too often been deemed argumentative fallacies that distract the audience from the policy or issue at hand by placing the argument in direct relation to the speaker and society in general. The Toulmin (1958) model of argumentation serves as a prominent example of form in argumentation as the model operates as an instrument for the invention, evaluation, and criticism of an argument’s strength. Brockriede and Ehninger popularized Toulmin’s model in the United States, among rhetoricians, in a 1960 essay in which they concurred, “If one assumes some rationality among men, a system of logical treatment of argument is imperative” (p. 113; Marcus, 2002). Brockriede and Ehninger utilized Toulmin’s

model to critique classical structures of argument, including the enthymeme and syllogism, as being insufficient to capture modern day argumentation.

Resurrection of Pathos

While logos remains a dominant force in philosophical, economic, and political pursuits, lacunae in logos' ability to understand and improve the human condition has gained prominence. Parallel to logos-centric argumentation, pathos oriented theory says that the problematic nature of this binary is mirrored at the social level. This claim has been prominently examined in the contemporary work of mainstream public affairs writers and cognitive scientists like Westen (2007) and Lakoff (2009). Scholars across disciplines have agreed that, to some degree at least, humans are by nature emotional creatures. Acceptance of this position would label the modern search for rationality without emotion in public decision-making as unnatural. As Westen (2007) put it, "Feeling and thinking evolved together, and nature 'designed' them to work together...Emotions not only provide much of the 'fuel' that fires up our engines. They also provide most of the brake fluid" (p. 51).

This view of emotion as motivation solidifies an emerging consensus amongst rhetoricians, psychologists, sociologists, and political scientists that rationality is static in nature and so needs emotion to perpetuate action. Berezin (2001), focusing on the creation of political identities, credits emotion as a catalyst for political action and the construction/reconstruction of identities of citizenship. "Emotion is the pivot upon which political action turns. It is a vehicle of political learning that has the capacity to create new identities" (p. 93). These "new identities" Berezin attributes to political emotion

become the basis of citizenship. He explains that “Emotion is nonrational but it is not irrational. Emotion obliterates prior identities. It fuses self and other, subject and object, the ontological and epistemological” (93). The fusion of self and other is the very process by which a social contract may come into existence, and it is through the fusion of the ontological and the epistemological that who or what we are comes to shape our ability for how and what we know.

Recent critical scholarship has taken up the mantle of exposing the oppressive tendencies of a logos-centric world by focusing on how emotions, as explained through embodied experiences, are imbedded into our public discourse. It is through this exploration that pathos is making a comeback and it has the potential to disrupt our practical and theoretical understandings of the role of emotion in representing the state to the people and the people to the state. This process has led to a dominant logos being “built in” to our social structures and discourses, especially in discourses concerning the nature of argument, citizenship, gender, and the body.

The difficulty of containing the intricacies of emotion in a modernist argumentative structure discouraged early argumentation theorists from integrating emotion into their models and types of arguments. While there are theorists like Perelman² and Fisher³ who relied on audience premises as grounds for argument, for many their discipline and training precludes them from highlighting emotion⁴. Essentially, pathetic elements of argumentation are recognized in argumentation theory, but rarely are

² See Perelman (1969) for an explanation of his concept of universal audience

³ See Fisher (1984) for an explanation of his theory of public moral argument

these elements as fully flushed out as more logos centric ideas. However, a resurgence of this effort may be on the horizon. Miller and McKerrow's (2001) work represents a growing frustration with the either/or approach to logos and pathos. In their work on argument in presidential campaign discourse the scholars recognized the futility of this move when trying to understand how the populace is persuaded in the political realm, as well as the critical implications from this stance. They argued for a both/and approach to the binary by stating, "Separating these as 'reason only' and 'emotion only' neglects the possibility that emotion carries its own logic, and that reason needs emotion to move the soul to action" (44). This project echoes McKerrow's eloquent call for a reversal of this "logic" by arguing, "We need a society in which reason and emotion are valued, each in their own right, and for what they bring to the occasion. To do otherwise is to imprison ourselves in the narrow confines of an impersonal, mind-centered discourse that trammels the soul's recognition of its own humanity" (p. 325).

The assumption that logos-centric rationality is the natural condition of man resulted in overly rationalized constructions of social systems like citizenship. Of great concern to any legal conception of citizenship is the way in which it fed the preferential imbalance of the individual over the community. Bellamy (2008) argues this point succinctly:

According to the Aristotelian ideal, political citizenship had depended on being freed from the burdens of economic and social life-both in order to participate and to ensure that public rather than private interests were the main concern. By contrast, legal citizenship has private interest and their protection at heart. (p. 39)

Implicit in Bellamy's contention is that private interest in the logos-centric world operates through a rationalized form of self-interest, wherein the individual will only

adhere to the community's needs if they align with his or her own. This is illuminating because if it is accepted that rationalized self-interest is a legitimate primary motivation, then this system serves to secure resources to the elite and further marginalize other sectors of society. This preference for rationality in the political realm was constructed through a need to exclude emotion from public life, emotional appeals being more accessible to the masses, for fear that with emotion comes bias and inevitable insurrection against elite forces. The following historical review explains the role of monarchy in this transformation.

“At its most general level, citizenship refers to full membership in the community in which one lives,” but in practice it is the ability of a citizen to exercise that citizenship in the public realm that is important (Glenn p. 19). In Habermas's (1991) study of the origins and creation of the contemporary public sphere, he primarily focused on the formation and transformation of the public sphere. He described the process through which individual citizens may come together through homogenous, rationalized debate. Of concern for Habermas's pre-industrialization public sphere was the need for logos-driven, rational thought in public deliberation.

The primary issue with Habermas's view and the logos-centric paradigm as a whole is that it limits entrance into the power-center of society to only those with the education and/or resources that could reveal to them the “rules” of how to speak, live, and look in a “rational” or “civilized” manner. This ends up excluding large sectors of societies from input into governmental oversight and so contradicts the goals of democratic governance.

Another issue with a logos only perspective is the paradox that arises out of liberal democratic citizenship. Essentially, this paradox is that although our democracy is said to rely on a logos-centric, rationally educated populace, studies have found that many parts of the populace do not meet this standard. These scholars have found through examination little reason that our system should survive, “As critics focus on the conceptual defects of liberal citizenship, they generally refrain from asking why the liberal polity fails to fail as predicted, enduring and even thriving despite what appear to be irreparable flaws” (Kaplan, 2010, p. 2). This scholarship works to question one of the fundamental positions of modern democratic citizenship: that it should reject emotional decision-making.

In opposition to the idea of the rational democratic citizen, recent scholarship has promoted a citizen that blends pathos with logos. I label this contrasting concept of citizenship the “pathetic citizen.” It is important to note that the pathetic citizen is not conceived as a person devoid of rationality, but instead a person concurrently driven by reason and emotion to conduct the work of citizenship. Marcus (2002) argues “that people are able to be rational because they are emotional; emotions enable rationality...rationality is a special set of abilities that are recruited by emotion systems in the brain to enable us to adapt to the challenges that daily confront us” (p. 7). Adopting Marcus’ perspective offers a much more optimistic assessment of the state of the democratic citizen as he proffers the conclusion that “the current practice of citizenship is demonstrably far more accomplished, far more rational, even while being more emotional, than is generally observed” (p. 7). Further, DeLuca (2008) argues that imagery and

emotion operate in a manner similar to an enthymeme in that they “shift the responsibility of argument construction to the audience” thereby promoting engagement from the citizenry (p. 317). Understanding this position requires a reconsideration of the constitutive role of emotion in reuniting the mind and body of citizen.

As previously articulated, Habermas’s idea of rational deliberation in the public sphere barred entrance for much of society. Although he identifies public discourse as productive dialogue among citizens, this designation did not include women and minorities. The justification for this exclusion lies in the idea that public discourse is purely rational and thus “justified” the exclusion of minority groups that were thought to lack this ability in comparison to moneyed, white, men.

The implications of the pathetic paradigm shift are illuminated by the way it promotes inclusivity by allowing different sectors of society to gain representation in our public sphere. For example, scholars recognize the way in which the demoralization of emotional argument mirrored the subjugation of women from the public sphere. “The dichotomy is further complicated by its reference to gender, wherein males are the privileged users of rational talk, while women are relegated to the inferior stance in expressing ideas through emotion” (p. 43). This critical stance reveals the way in which rationality, when positioned in opposition to emotion, has become a hegemonic weapon. A weapon that has been wielded over time to recognize only the preferred members of society that have traditionally had access to elite schooling in logic as taught by other members of the favored class.

Feminist scholars like Berlant directly addressed the problematic exclusivity of the Habermasian model of the public sphere by arguing the division of the public and private spheres has only served to create a private sphere depository for women's issues so that they can be excluded from the public sphere. Basically, the pre-industrialized salon culture of France, which Habermas praised, can only work when a homogenous sector of society is the only voice allowed into the salon. In contrast, working to make pathetic discourse acceptable in public increases power for the marginalized voices in the citizenry.

As Glenn (2002) explains, the notion of the citizen came into existence on the global landscape as monarchies begin to fall to democratic institutions. It was in this transition that the importance of regulating and managing the monarch's body transferred to the importance of regulating the body of the individual citizenship for the productive purposes of society. In the context of the logos-centric model the "civilized body" is a formulaic construction created through the means of the scientific method in order to gain the power to "diagnose" a body as abnormal that does not meet the needs of the state. From this perspective, a body is defined medically and scientifically through standardized tests and measurements; like skin color, height, weight, and the infamous BMI scale (Gilman, 2010).

The physical body of a member of the state has been of concern dating back to the monarchical periods wherein the king's body acted as conduit for representation of the power of the state and the security of the citizens. When the monarchical system collapsed, this potential for the physical body to act as a synecdoche for the "health" of the nation

was disseminated to the citizenry as a whole. The dominant western logos-centric conception of the body is that it is an entity to be examined, constrained, contained, and ultimately disciplined to meet the needs of the state. This notion that the body can and should act as a visual marker for social qualities like class, status, virtue, and discipline has created many problems for individuals and society in general. The binary led to the celebration of the mind as the locus for logos and was translated into notions of citizenship in the form of the civilized body, of which Farrell writes, “the citizen and expressions of citizenship have been circumscribed both discursively as well as materially through a limiting construction of the civilized body to reveal the validity of the argument that...the [concept of the] ‘civilized body’ is alive, well and dangerous” (2011, p. 116). Basically, a logos-centric conception of the body of a citizen focuses on the normalization of that body, by identifying and marginalizing bodies that deviate from this standpoint

The connection between citizenship and the body is centered in discourses that relate to the definition and the exercise of citizenship in American society, and speak to the productive power of the rhetoric of citizenship. In monarchial times the king was able to dictate through royal fiat, but democratic leaders needed the consent of the people and so had to seek additional means of persuasion. Post the dissolution of the monarchies the binary between rationality and emotion ceased to make sense as a governing philosophy. For instance, the binary that places the body and the mind in conflict with each other became insufficient to understand the modes of power the head of the state would utilize to exert control over the populace. Foucault’s work on biopower illuminates the way in

which the tactic of surveillance operates through the populace's constant fear of having their body and actions observed. Agency can be found in the counterpoint of this fear, by the action of the individual displaying their body so that it can be seen on display.

However, viewing the body from this perspective does not directly account for the power dynamics inherent to the observer-object relationship of observation. Foucault prolifically wrote of the powers that create and constrain the "civilized body." In *Power/Knowledge* (1980) Foucault argues in an interview that in order to understand the body we must ask the question, "What mode of investment of the body is necessary and adequate for the functioning of a capitalist society like ours?" (p. 58). Foucault dubbed the investment of power onto the body as bio-power, a form of social power that political philosophy has traditionally overlooked. Of this power, Foucault (1990) writes that modern nation states have turned from an era of regulating death to an era, "characterized [by] a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through" (p. 139). Further, this move constituted "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of "bio-power"" (p. 140).

For McKerrow and other critical scholars, rhetorical studies can be instrumental in understanding this rhetorical shift due to its capacity to represent the interaction between reason and emotion through an embodied performance. Several prominent rhetorical studies have demonstrated this point through their examination of the use of bodies as political protest. In Morris and Sloop's 2006 work on the politics of queer public kissing they articulate the political nature of this act as kairotic, which creates a

crisis from which new attitudes may be created. The kairos of this act is imbued with emotion for both the actor and the spectator; it is through that emotional response that Morris and Sloop see the potential for political and cultural change.

Similarly, DeLuca's (2008) examination of body rhetoric of groups like "Earth First!, Act Up, and Queer Nation", submits that, "vulnerable bodies, dangerous bodies, taboo bodies, ludicrous bodies, transfigured bodies...constitute a nascent body rhetoric that deploys bodies as a pivotal resource for the crucial practice of public argumentation" (p. 10). Achter (2010) extended DeLuca's work to examine the way in which the bodies of veterans of war communicate in the public sphere. "Veterans of wars in Afghanistan and Iraq with visually identifiable injuries possess 'unruly' bodies that render the story of war in efficient, emotional terms" (p. 46). DeLuca and Achter's works support the notion that there is something emotional and disruptive about bodies, and how that power can be utilized by marginalized communities. However, much of the scholarship on the emotional power of bodies has centered on the use of this strategy by a counterpublic, and so has ignored the interaction between the center and the margins of society through the insertion of body rhetoric in the public sphere. This lacunae in the literature related to body rhetoric is reinforced by an examination of the role of pathos in public sphere argumentation. DeLuca (2008) wrote of what he dubbed "unruly arguments," and argued "image events are a form of postmodern argumentative practice, a kind of oppositional argument that creates social controversy, and animates and widens possibilities for debate" (p. 315). DeLuca's premise mirrors a strong argument for the pathetic dimension of public argumentation because the image can entice the viewer and invoke emotions that

disrupt current modes of thinking, ultimately making space for alternative ways of thinking. Essentially, image events are arguments that seek to start a controversy rather than offer immediate resolution. This idea of gaining agency through disruptive image events does not fit into the logos-centric, modernist way of understanding public discourse, and so is calling for a shift through which visual challenges to the system can be understood as not only rational, but potentially effective.

In summation, the work *On Rhetoric* by Aristotle conceptualized emotions as pathos and placed them on the same plane as logos and ethos with respect to the creation of persuasion. The impact of this act was dissolved throughout the Renaissance as a means for allowing the elite to remain in power through discourse control of the woman or man, their respective bodies, and the status that those bodies hold in society. However, recent critical work in rhetorical theory has revealed cracks in the once smooth veneer of the logos-centric perspective. The exclusivity of the logos-centric perspective is illuminated by work focusing on the margins of society and the way in which they interact with the hegemonic center. Deluca's conception of unruly arguments and Foucault's examination of the pseudo-logical means through which we brand and dismiss unwanted members of our society, and our growing understanding of the rhetorical impact of citizenship have all served to highlight the need for a paradigm shift. However, in order to navigate the implications of this shift, and cultivate a more expansive study of politics, we must first reexamine our understanding of reasoning and emotion.

Pathos, Logos, and Political Rhetoric

Despite the field's traditionalist impulses, scholars of political rhetoric have recently recognized the impact of this paradigm shift. Stuckey (2010) argued for a "rethinking" of the concept of the rhetorical presidency because "this model assumes a white male president who governs within a pre-cable, pre-internet, political context" (p. 38). Further, she suggested that "There are too few studies of the embodied presidency and there are productive possibilities in melding the study of the rhetorical presidency with other areas in the field" (p. 49). Stuckey's call to expand our understanding of the presidency beyond formulaic conceptions of speech acts leads this project to search for an alternative to our understanding of political rhetorical power because it has been limited by a logos-centric perspective that does not allow for the recognition and appreciation of the pathetic perspective.

The concept of the rhetorical presidency emerged in the 1980's and has produced a broad range of scholarship in the study of communication, history, and political science. Tulis (1987) argues that the rhetorical presidency is a twentieth-century phenomenon, broadly utilized by President Wilson in his effort to give coherence to public policy by communicating with "the people." Implicit to Tulis' understanding of this 20th-century phenomenon, is the suggestion that previous presidents, specifically from the 19th century, had expressed some sort of aversion to popular and pathetic rhetoric. While Tulis' work focused on the potential detrimental effects of pathetic appeals on deliberative democracy; communication scholars have readily adopted and proceeded to build from the notion that the primary source of power for a president is his or her own rhetoric. However, I argue that our conception of presidential rhetoric is too circumscribed. In

order to better understand the rich complexity of presidential rhetoric I contend that we need to come to look at presidential power as more than just the rhetorical work of the president, and instead to work to expand the analysis to other rhetorical actors in the administration, including the first lady. This pursuit has the potential to collapse the binary between logos and pathos that discriminates against women by legitimizing pathos, and ultimately empower a different model of citizenship.

Putting a Rhetorical Lens on the First Lady

The traditional view of the United States presidency as espoused by Caroli (1987) argues that it “includes two jobs that are performed by separate individuals in other forms of representative governments: a head of state who presides over ceremonial functions and a head of government who makes major appointments and takes a decisive role in legislation” (p. xviii). However, recent technological and cultural, shifts have necessitated that the first lady become the prime purveyor of the ceremonial function. Just as these jobs are allocated by position and gender they are also circumscribed by the persuasive appeals they are expected to emphasize. As the head of state, the president is expected to symbolize his control and power through a logos-centric hyper-masculinized performance. As the presidential counterpart, and de facto ceremonial head of state, the first lady is expected to emphasize her femininity in order to avoid the perception that she is emasculating the president. Appeals from the first lady have traditionally been and will continue to relate to her status as a mother, a woman in love, and a caretaker. This situation has led presidents to offer their wives as a surrogate for their approval and as a symbol for their control over their government. In effect, if the body of the president is

viewed as a reflection of the thoughtful decision-making role of the American people, then he is expected to focus on the cerebral, logos-based tasks, leaving the first lady to embody and represent the pathetic, ceremonial values of the American people.

However, Marton (2001) argues the ceremonial role is “more than style, hairdos, White House décor, inaugural gowns, controversies over china, and guest lists. Instead she states that the role of presidential spouses is vital to a full understanding of their husbands’ administrations and the presidency itself” as the first lady serves as “a link to the real world from which his power and position isolate him” (pp. 3-4). Central to understanding the interpretive role of the first lady is an examination of the way in which the concept of the rhetorical presidency finds its pathetic counterpart in the role of the first lady. Studies on the function and role of the first lady have adopted the role of the rhetorical president as a tool to assess the power of the office. Parry-Giles and Blair (2002) argue that the rhetorical rise of the first lady is a “path that at once holds a symbiotic relationship with the rhetorical presidency yet is unique in its own rhetorical path and substance”(p. 566). Essentially, that the Office of the First Lady (OFL) has a rhetorical function that operates primarily from a site of pathetic discourse allowing the first lady to access the negotiation of cultural values among the citizenry.

However, the office is different in substance and style. The Constitution does not allocate substantive or specific duties to the OFL, so the position has only been defined through institutional custom and cultural expectations. Most important of those customs and expectations is that messages disseminated from the OFL should work to support the overall goals and purposes of the president’s administration. Stylistically, the office

differs because it is expected to operate as an extension of the feminine private sphere but it performs in the cultural sphere of public discourse. First ladies are routinely sent out to commemorations, memorials, dedications, and other rhetorical events that have constructed the celebrity status of the office in our culture. In order to better understand the criticisms of the OFL we should look to the specific roles and methods of containment that this office encounters.

Parry-Giles (2000) explained that women in politics often encounter a “double bind” in that they are expected to be the purveyor of the private sphere but to represent it in the public sphere and this leads to a situation in which a “woman [may] become so powerful they lose their femininity” (p. 208). Hayden (1999) argues that the female political representative negotiates this paradoxical view of femininity by employing feminine style, “as a rhetorical strategy, feminine style often reflects rhetors’ efforts to negotiate the power relations that gender entails” (p. 100). Feminine style is most notably understood as “a synthesis of form and substance that works to promote an alternative political philosophy reflecting traditionally feminine values,” essentially it is a style that promotes participatory action and invokes a personal tone (Dow & Boor Tonn, 1993, p. 287). While some have celebrated the recognition of the utilization and prevalence of feminine style, others have claimed that this sort of rhetorical compartmentalizing serves only to further marginalize women. Hayden (1997) questioned whether a form “embraced by the dominant culture can at the same time serve to challenge that culture” (p. 137). Parry-Giles (1996) makes clear the limitations of feminine style to lead to female empowerment, “while most campaign rhetorics exhibit a ‘feminine style’ they

simultaneously rely upon prevailing masculine values and themes. Instead of resulting in a feminized political sphere, contemporary campaign rhetorics reflect the continual marginalization of women in the political process and the general exclusion of women from political office and political power” (p. 338).

Borrelli (2011) argued, “we know much more about what first ladies have not done than about what they have consistently and routinely contributed to the presidency” (p. 2). Borrelli’s statement highlights the prolific yet fragmented nature of a scholarship that focuses on the role(s) and influence of the first ladies of the United States by looking past the role of the first lady as purely ornamental and instead contend that the first lady serves an important representative role in government. “Rather than simply restating or explaining the president’s words to the public, the first lady takes on the much more difficult and far riskier task of interpreting one to the other” (p. 211). She goes on to argue that “he embodies the best of the public sphere; she embodies the best of the private sphere,” an argument that leads this analysis to examine the way in which the first lady may act as interpreter between the public and private sphere, thereby collapsing the dichotomy (p. 5).

Past research has primarily illuminated the way in which first ladies have deviated from a general understanding of the cultural expectations for their office. In many cases this has been to the detriment of working toward a greater understanding of the way in which this office has expanded and changed in modern presidencies. Historically, the first lady is symbolically considered the “leader of the nation’s women,” a title that supports a gendered conception of the office itself. Borrelli (2011) argues that, “integral to these

public expectations and to first lady priorities, are judgments about gender, and gender role modeling (p. 3),” a fact that is highlighted by the juxtaposition of the first lady to the office of the president, an office that “gender scholars have concluded is arguably the most intensely masculine post in the United States government” (p. 2). Interestingly, Marton (2001) notes how slowly this office has reacted to changing social norms, “Ironically, while women have been breaking down the last remaining barriers toward full equality, the first lady’s political role remains circumscribed” (p. 5).

Of primary concern for many is that the first lady’s relationship to power is sexual in nature due to her marriage to the President, a situation in which patriarchy’s fears of female sexuality is given room to coalesce. It’s not that the relationship is sexual, but that patriarchy thinks it is, and it conjures the dominant hegemonic fear of female sexuality. Many scholars have argued that society fears the “pillow influence” of the first lady, which includes “behind-the-scenes influence that might come simply from being the president’s partner, lover, and confidante” (Watson, 1997). In addition, the legitimacy of the OFL has been called in to question because she is not an elected position and so some believe she should have no access to power given by the people. However, scholars like Anderson (2005) offer a more optimistic view of the future of the office of the first lady as she argues that, “by virtue of their husbands’ elections, first ladies become ‘sites’ for the symbolic negotiation of female identity” that ultimately work to both “foster and constrain women’s agency” (Anderson, 2005, p. 2). Anderson further states that past first ladies “have been able to confound the ambiguities latent in gender dichotomies by

developing paradox in ways that deconstruct female identity and open possibilities for political agency” (Anderson, 2005, p. 2).

The first lady’s power for construction and propagation of social and national meaning lies in her role as a nexus between the president and the public (Borrelli, 2011). In the past this role has been dismissed as purely ornamental, however the recent technological advancements have worked to expand the influence of the first lady by the prolific dissemination of her image. In other words, while it still may require a “slow news day” for a speech made by the first lady to become prime time news, the image of the first lady permeates our social and political imagery. For example, Michelle Obama frequently appears in a variety of media and on the cover of magazines. These appearances have such a prominent effect on sales that the *Harvard Business Review* has coined the term “first lady index:”

Professor David Yermack of NYU’s Stern School found that following 189 public appearances between November 2008 and December 2009, Michelle Obama created \$2.7 billion in cumulative abnormal returns—value over and above normal market variations—for fashion and retail companies associated with the clothes she wore. (The Michelle Obama Effect Slideshow)

Clearly, much of the potential to access the political capital and influence of the first lady is rooted in the pathetic dimensions derived primarily from the imagery that surrounds the tension between her private and political roles in the public sphere. But when pathos is considered to play a greater role in the public, the powers of the president and the first lady appear more intertwined. I argue that the president has the power to speak about American life in front of the public, but the first lady is uniquely positioned to embody the power to live the American life in front of the public.

Therefore the central question is not whether the OFL has power, but through what rhetorical means can the OFL utilize it, regardless of the patriarchal insecurities that have traditionally been suspicious of this possibility. More specifically, these criticisms illustrate the pervasive fear that the rationalized, masculine, logos-centered Office of the President may be defiled or contaminated by the emotional, pathetic nature of the Office of the First Lady. Setting these concerns aside raises the question, “What are we missing when we evaluate the Office of the First Lady through only her logo-centric connection to power and influence and marginalize the pathetic appeal of her political discourse?” To engage this question, I propose to examine the rhetorical role that Michelle Obama has played during the Obama Administration.

The Rhetoric and Policy of the Obama Administration

Following the election of President Barack Obama the effort of obtaining his key campaign promise of healthcare reform faced the obstacle of operating in a changing political environment due to recent technological changes for political rhetoric. Despite the acknowledgement of the power of the “bully pulpit” for the president, changing technological circumstances have served to undermine this political action. Starr (2011) explains that in the 60’s and 70’s nearly half of the American populace watched presidential addresses, “but with the explosion in the number of channels in the 1980’s, the TV audience splintered, and presidents had to compete with entertainment” (p. 221). For the 44th President Barack Obama and his pledge to fulfill his campaign promise of overhauling healthcare this was particularly daunting. Starr (2011) reports “Fifty-two

million people watched his first [healthcare] address in February, but on September 9, the audience was down to 32 million” (p. 221).

Further complicating the Obamas’ administrative objective was the controversial nature of healthcare reform in the United States. For the past hundred years, starting with President Theodore Roosevelt, presidents have attempted some modicum of expanding healthcare in the United States with the results being largely unsuccessful. The core problem seemed that the value systems embedded in the discourse surrounding universal healthcare appeared antithetical to American individualism. This contention was crystallized in public discourse by claims that an overhaul of healthcare would be tantamount to socialism. For the Obamas and their supporters, these claims were compounded by personal and radicalized attacks questioning the president’s legitimacy. Amidst this controversy, and perhaps because of it, President Obama instructed his speechwriters to focus on the economics of healthcare:

After a month of fear and anger, the president needed to restate the moral case for health-care reform. A few months earlier, in June, when Obama addressed the American Medical Association, he has told his speechwriters to focus on cost containment, and in the speech itself he has mentioned the uninsured only toward the end. (Starr, 2011, p. 222)

Although Barack Obama read letters from the uninsured and sick in each of his appearances in support of the bill, the central rhetoric focused on an economic rationality. His rhetoric served as a call to ignore the heated emotions of the moment, and attune ourselves to the political realities of the present and future. Ultimately, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) would pass both legislatures and be signed into law by President Obama on March 23, 2010. However, the law would not include many elements that the

Obama's democratic base had wanted. In the end, Barack Obama was successful at getting a version of the ACA into law but the controversy would live on because the ACA left much of the responsibility for implementation to the states. The ensuing discourse would reveal that although President Obama had signed the bill into law, many still questioned the law as being antithetical to American values. Expanding our understanding of the rhetorical presidency and the sources of presidential influence to include the first lady helps explain First Lady Michelle Obama's rhetorical role in supporting her husband's initiatives.

Much of Michelle Obama's involvement in the healthcare debate centered upon her "Let's Move!" anti-obesity campaign. The first lady officially launched her campaign in 2010 with a speech in which she set a goal of eliminating childhood obesity within a generation. In the ensuing years since Michelle Obama's speech and the Task Force's report, the campaign has prominently relied upon political imagery produced by numerous visits to school cafeterias across the nation, a plethora of photo opportunities in the White House garden, and even physical fitness challenges with celebrities like Ellen DeGeneres and Jimmy Fallon. What has stood out rhetorically in this messaging, whether it is the first lady doing push-ups on daytime television or running through an obstacle course with Fallon in the White House, is that the visual melding of cultural to political mirrors the way in which we are being called upon to transcend the individual and join the American collective of citizenry.

What was particularly notable about this presentation was the way in which the very body and presence of Michelle Obama served to underscore her proposed cultural

and political changes. Her body first earned attention in the media in 2009 when she chose to wear a sleeveless dress, an outfit that highlighted her well sculpted upper arms in her official White House portrait. In response to this event newspaper columnist David Brooks wrote, “She’s made her point. Now she should put away Thunder and Lightning...she should not be known for her physical presence” (Farrell, 2011, p. 135). Since that initial controversy, Michelle Obama’s physical body has had a consistent presence in arguments and commentary related to the first lady’s role in the White House and more importantly to her role as a spokeswoman for anti-obesity efforts. I argue that insertion of her own body as evidence for her campaign represents an emerging topos, or traditional rhetorical form, in first lady rhetoric.

In order to examine the claim that the influence of the first lady lies in her ability to operate as a site for cultural negotiation we now shift to an understanding of the power of the visual. I turn to an analysis of images of Michelle Obama. Examining the first lady’s anti-obesity initiative as part of the Obama Administration’s healthcare campaign provides a unique circumstance to better understand the way the OFL can assist the president in addressing the public through the means of visual rhetoric. These initiatives are unique in that the Obamas’ healthcare campaign combined the President’s logocentric rhetoric advocating a piece of legislation with the first lady’s affective rhetoric promoting cultural awareness primarily through the use of her body as evidence. I do not argue that the president and the first lady solely used either logocentric or affective reasoning, but rather suggest that an analysis of their individual approaches, such as

Michelle Obama's emphasis of image events over public speeches, is an endeavor that will allow access to her pathetic potential.

Reading Protocol

The pathetic realm allows the First Lady to embody and visually represent the American citizen to the citizenry. A central problem with addressing this realm of political identity and argumentation is its experiential nature. In the pathetic dimension, meaning is primarily produced and reproduced within the boundaries of the political ritual and direct engagement. Despite this dilemma several scholars have found themselves 'seeking' the affective/emotional in the political realm through avenues such as performance studies, social movement analysis, and most instructive for this project; the study of visual rhetoric (Berezin, 2001; Hariman & Lucaites, 2007; Taylor, 2007). I provide a way of negotiating the terrain between these voices and traditional understandings of the form and function of political rhetoric.

Olson (2007) explains "In the United States, research into visual rhetoric has flourished in colleges and universities for over half a century now," the resulting fifty plus years of scholarship produced new terminologies, controversies, and an appreciation for the potential of the visual image as a rhetorical force (p. 1). At the heart of these critiques is the ontological question of what an image "is." This is a central question because it guides the way in which a rhetorical critic will approach and read a rhetorical situation. However, I employ Mitchell's (2005) broad perspective on defining images to the point where the ontological question becomes superfluous. Instead, the question becomes epistemological and questions what an image "does." "By "image" I mean any

likeness, figure, motif, or form that appears in some medium or other” (2005, p. xiii). The utility of this position is that when we release ourselves from the burden of circular ontological reasoning we may then be able to illuminate the rhetorical power of images as they exist in relation to the spectator. For Mitchell, this raises the question “what do images want, and what do we want from them?”

A particularly compelling thesis in Mitchell’s work is the idea that images are feminine, because it illuminates the pathetic potential of imagery. Mitchell argues of “our wish to penetrate [images] and our fear of being swallowed up by them. (I trust that there’s no reason for me to comment on the heavy quotient of what is called male fantasy in this scene)” (2005, p. xvii). Mitchell’s positioning of the image as occupying a similar position to archaic conceptions of the female as a siren, full of desire and emotion that can corrupt the male rationality is a position that recognizes the allure of the image as well as the way it may be susceptible to misuse and abuse. His eroticization and personification of images speaks to the idea that images have the capability to exert power, but that capability is only realized by the manner in which we treat them. This is most clearly opined in Mitchell’s contention that the image wants to transfix the spectator, but only for a moment because the next step is mobilization.

In essence, this contention likens the “power” of images to a conception of the female mourning her “castration” in the public sphere, in that the image exists through its appeals to emotion but lacks what it wants. It requires spectators to bring the element of rationality through their own interpretation mechanisms. The image is at its most powerful when it can “transfix” the spectator and offer a lens or a frame to interpret the

world. Given our gendered conception of the OFL, this idea poses compelling questions for this study by questioning both the way we utilize images of Michelle Obama and the way in which rhetorical scholars approach the study of the first lady.

The process of seeking images in civic life reveals that it is the multiplicity of meanings that emanate from imagery that make them particularly useful for creating and communicating social knowledge. This knowledge is dependent on the images' ability to be seen and experienced through an affective dimension by the spectator. It is this work of 'seeing' that raises the potential of imagery to construct and reconstruct conceptions of the citizen and citizenship as a whole. Hariman & Lucaites (2002) explain that the key to the process of visuals communicating social knowledge is the "capacity for reflexivity; appropriations of an iconic image activate a range of emotions and attitudes without violating the aura of the original" (p. 381).

In summary, in order to interrogate the pathetic potential of first lady rhetoric I take a broad perspective of what an image is and focus on the interaction it promotes with and among spectators. This protocol was constructed with the goal of gaining information on the pathetic and experiential potential of imagery to create, negotiate, and disseminate social/civic knowledge.

This project aims at addressing several questions that have direct pertinence for our political system as well as our understanding of rhetorical appeals and messaging. A central question to this investigation is what are the dangers and advantages involved in utilizing emotional appeals in the political/public realms? Political pundits and scholars alike have recognized the American conservative Right's recent and effective utilization

of emotional appeals to mobilize their socially conservative base. The political left has been particularly reticent to adopt the same tactics under the assumption that emotion-based appeals do not fit with their “pure” or logical appeals for public policy.

A case study of Michelle Obama’s initiatives allows exploration of how modern technology has advanced the form and function of political emotional appeals. A technologically optimistic perspective would assume that our social systems will naturally evolve or adapt to advancements in a manner that prevents the degradation of our deliberative system. However, several prominent scholars from across the disciplinary plane suggest otherwise. It is from this context arises the important question of what means become available for institutional politicians and the citizenry to construct and counter emotional appeals in the policy making realm. More specifically, do pathetic appeals have the potential to attend to the underlying national/cultural values that are the foundation of political debate in a way that logos-centric appeals are not? How might this capability function within a political dialectic plagued by rampant partisanship?

A core goal of this work is to investigate how the visuality of the material body of a citizen can operate as a site for negotiating citizenship between the people and its government. It is common to accept the argument that how we see affects the way we listen and learn about our surrounding sociality. In our very language we can hear visuality represented. Phrases like “I can see that,” “In the eye of the beholder,” and numerous other ocular centric cultural idioms represent the authenticity that we attribute to sight over speech. The pursuit in this project is to examine if the power of authenticity

or visuality can be a force for constructing the expectations and nature of the American citizen.

What is clear from empirical observation is that recent communication technologies have led us to a point where image politics has become more dominant in our political/public sphere. Although scholars like Goodnight (2008) have criticized the way in which the personalization of our political discourse has resulted in the degradation of the public sphere, recent technologies like the twenty-four hour news channels, the Internet, and handheld social media devices promise that this trend is unlikely to reverse. Given this position, it is imperative that we come to understand the forces outside of rationalized debate, especially personalized pathetic appeals that are impacting our policies as well as our identities as an American people.

CHAPTER 2 THE PATHETIC RHETORICAL REVOLUTION

One of the primary tasks of the previous chapter was to illuminate the historical narratives that serve to disparage pathos's rhetorical ethicality. However, the more burdensome task of integrating pathos into our system of understanding political judgment remains. I begin that task in this chapter by charting the numerous scholarly endeavors throughout the years that outline the theoretical struggle to legitimate pathos in rhetoric. I explore this pursuit of pathos largely through scholarship that examines the 'original sin' waged against pathos, a misunderstanding of Aristotle's conception of the rhetorical proofs. To contextualize this endeavor within modern democratic life in the western world I offer parallels of pathos's denigration to modern suspicions surrounding the rhetorical ability of the Office of the First Lady.

In democratic life, pathos suffers from two primary hurdles in its struggle for legitimacy: authenticity and appropriateness. The pervasive fear of demagoguery, an expressed appeal to the people that draws on emotional appeals instead of rational appeals, is a predominant obstacle for pathos. This is in large part due to the prevailing view of a demagogue as a 'provocateur' or 'agitator' that seeks disruption for the sake of disruption. Essentially, the demagogue engages in rhetorical discourse for the ancillary purpose of gaining power rather than a 'pure,' i.e. rational, pursuit of the public good. Just as the ethos of the demagogue is questioned, so too is their means of pathetic argumentation.

Despite the threat of demagoguery, a distinct set of scholars has emerged to question this modern conception. What is most revealing in tracing this thread of

literature is that you do not have to look very far into rhetorical theory to discover arguments that question our preconceived assumptions of pathos' inability to meet the standards of authenticity and appropriateness.

Waddell (1990) questions the utility of the presumption of 'rational purity' in our democratic system and finds that it falls in the face of greater rhetorical scrutiny. "Faced with the elevated status of logos and the degraded status of pathos, we would do well to recall that, like appeals to emotion, rational appeals are themselves problematic," (Waddell, 1990, p. 382). Further, he draws from Aristotle to remind us that rational appeals can be just as inauthentic as emotional appeals (Aristotle, 1400b35). Although his assertion may appear to fall into the precarious trap of tu quoque reasoning, his central argument serves as a call to avoid the fallacy of false dichotomy. Essentially he is speaking against a common criticism of pathos, that it can be utilized in an unethical manner and so should be dismissed, by pointing out that logos can also be utilized in a problematic manner. For Waddell, when it comes to pathos and logos it is not an either/or, but instead it is a both/and standard that should be applied.

Second, Waddell argues that rational appeals have a tendency to be tautological in nature, i.e. that they often are true by necessity. This tendency reduces the utility of logos in democratic life to discussions of certainties, of which there are few in the realm of political influence. For instance, the argument that "healthcare is a right," asserted without the pathetic backing is tautological in nature because its validity relies solely on the government's definition of what is a "right" in the United States. Third, Waddell argues that although rational appeals may assist us in agreement, they lack the rhetorical

force to incite action through motivation. He draws from a Hasting Center Report, a non-partisan bioethics research center established in 1969, to remind us “naked reason can lead us to morally indefensible conclusions,” (Waddell, 1990, p. 382). For example, with respect to the healthcare debate during Obama’s administration, a principal conservative rationalization to deny healthcare reform is the idea that you should only get what you can pay for. This argument was successful in countering Obama’s argument that our healthcare crisis is also an economic crisis as republicans were able to agree with the value of healthcare while at the same time saying “but we can’t afford it.” However, inject into that debate pathetic arguments, highlighting narratives of ill citizens denied healthcare, and the dynamics of the debate could be altered. In the face of pathetic appeals narrating stories of citizens suffering and dying, the response that “we can’t afford for them not to” does not hold the same weight as it did in the purely logical argument that the healthcare crisis is an economic and security crisis in the making.

Finally, Waddell turned the argument that pathos is the tool of the demagogue on its head. He argued that by ignoring the role of emotional appeals in political decision-making we might be empowering the demagogue. According to Waddell we empower the demagogue when we ignore their use of pathetic arguments under the artifice that the populace will not see them as rational and so dismiss them. Instead, he advocated for the formation of critical skills to combat this phenomenon:

We must advocate wider acceptance of the role emotional appeals play in public-policy formation. Moreover, since some emotional appeals (e.g. appeals to race and hatred) clearly are destructive of the community, we must develop a clearer understanding of how we distinguish appropriate from inappropriate emotional appeals. (Waddell, 1990, p. 382)

In sum, Waddell takes a stance very similar to the ‘golden mean’ originally articulated by the theorist he examines to construct his argument, Aristotle. He does not deny the destructive potential of unethical pathetic discourse, but he recognizes the productive potential of ethical, i.e. appropriate, pathetic discourse. The concept that supports this position is also drawn from Aristotle, however vaguely, from the ethical standard of ‘appropriateness.’ In *The Rhetoric* Aristotle speaks of this standard in relation to style, “Your language will be *appropriate* [sic] if it expresses emotion and character, and if it corresponds to its subject” (1408a, 10). It is notable that Aristotle places pathos (emotion) directly within his standard of rhetorical ethics. Waddell draws from Aristotle to suggest that we reject the traditionalist dichotomous mindset of good or bad, and instead focus on ‘what is’ in our political discourse with respect to our understanding of pathos and logos. Clearly, at least for Waddell and Aristotle, emotion has existed and will continue to exist in our public discourse, and so requires examination without an assumption of condemnation.

In advance of Waddell in 1990, classical scholar W. W. Fortenbaugh published a seminal text *Aristotle on Emotion* (1975) that sought to reexamine the nature of pathos through historical analysis. Fortenbaugh’s thesis relied on understanding the importance of the pathetic debate that occurred in Plato’s Academy, most significantly in how Aristotle extended it in his works *Rhetoric* and *Topics* (Topos). “Members of the Academy including Aristotle focused upon emotions as distinct from bodily sensations and bodily drives and tried to explain the involvement of cognition in emotional response,” (Fortenbaugh, 1975, p. 9). Fortenbaugh argues that contrary to modern

popular opinion it was Aristotle's work relating and differentiating rhetoric from the dialectic that actually served to offer pathos, "a new dignity within rhetorical theory, dramatic poetry was freed from Platonic charges of corrupting reason" (p. 9).

Fortenbaugh sees Aristotle's distinction of emotions like 'anger' as a desire for revenge accompanied by pain on account of (dia) "an apparent slight to oneself or to one's own, the slight being unjustified (1378a30-2)" (p. 12) as evidence of Aristotle's conclusion on the relationship between cognition and emotion. Essentially, Aristotle construed "thought or belief as the efficient cause of emotion...showing that emotional response is intelligent behavior open to reasoned persuasion" (p. 17). Essentially, he argues that Aristotle established emotional acts as intelligent because they are based in "thought," which collapsed emotion and reason. "Their belief may be erroneous and their anger unreasonable, but their behavior is intelligent and cognitive in the sense that it is grounded upon a belief which may be criticized and even altered by argumentation" (Fortenbaugh, p. 17).

Fortenbaugh offers an intriguing thesis in his reference of Aristotle's work, however he remains vague on how we should pursue the nature of this cognition that connects pathos to 'intelligent' behavior. Scholars outside of rhetorical studies have taken to examining 'emotional thinking' through a scientific approach, as shown in the popularity of books like George Lakoff's *The Political Mind: A Cognitive Scientist's Guide to your Brain and its Politics* (2008) and Drew Westen's *The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation* (2007). Essentially, these texts argue that at some point our scientific methodology will advance to the point that scientists can

measure and chart emotion acting in and on the brain. This idea operates as a kind of anti-rhetoric in that it answers the critique that science is rhetorical by responding that rhetoric is science. However, for this scientific pursuit to have a future requires a form of technology that has the capacity to take into account neurological scanning as well as variables that include context, memory, ego, etc. Basically, this requires technology that has advanced to the point that it mirrors the human condition and the only way that can happen is if humans have advanced enough that they obtained pure or absolute knowledge about themselves. From a social constructivist point of view the viability of this evolution is severely questioned, leaving us with the need to continue investigating emotion from a rhetorical perspective. While only time will tell whether or not this will be a fruitful scientific endeavor, Waddell and Fortenbaugh argue its existence does not preclude an investigation of emotion through an analysis of rhetorical pathos.

Given the abundant presence of rhetorical scholars arguing for a reconceptualization of the way pathos operates in rhetoric it stands to question, why is pathos' denigration still so prominent in modern discourse? The answer lies in the academy's hardened esteem for scientific methods, in this case Aristotle's system of classification, and our tendency not to question the tenets of what Kuhn (3rd edition 1996) calls 'normal science' and studies like cognitive psychology. Kuhn's prolific work challenges the prevailing notion that scientific knowledge is cumulative. Instead, he suggests that it is episodic, in that major transitions in knowledge occur through the recognition and dissonance created through anomalies. The transition is explained as "...a reconstruction of the field from new fundamentals, a reconstruction that some of the

field's most elementary theoretical generalizations as well as many of its paradigm methods and applications" (Kuhn, 1996, p. 85). Kuhn's position essentially undermines the truth-value of science by identifying "truth" as episodic instead of objective. He reintroduced a humanistic perspective into science by arguing that the paradigm shifts of science are not supported by pure logic and instead are supported by humanistic motivations, thus making rhetoric relevant again.

Looking at the understanding of pathos in our modern academic and political realms reveal numerous anomalies and perhaps may be signaling a coming revolution of classification for decades. Kuhn suggests that when a scientist is faced with an, "...admittedly fundamental anomaly in theory, the scientist's first effort will often be to isolate it more precisely and give it more structure" (p. 86). I argue that Aristotle's vague and often-conflicting account of pathos suggests that for him, pathos presented just that sort of anomaly. Within the study of persuasion, pathos presented itself as a potentially powerful force, but one that resisted integration into a classification system due to its reliance on contextual factors like personal history, ego, and the nature of humanity. Future symptoms of scientific expeditions wrestling with anomaly include "[they] often seem a man searching at random, trying experiments just to see what will happen, looking for an effect whose nature he cannot guess" (Kuhn, p. 87). This characterization mirrors the common treatment of pathos as ethereal or intangible within the realm of rhetoric. Aristotle acted just as Kuhn would eventually predict and scientist faced with an anomaly would, he isolated pathos and attempted to force structure onto the term.

However, Aristotle's attempts were often contradictory and confusing leading scholars to either dismiss the value of pathos and/or label it irrational and of a lesser status.

Given that the signs for a paradigm revolution are there, and scholars have been questioning our popular conception of pathos for decades, the question arises: Why now? First, our insistence on deifying the dominant interpretation of Aristotle and Aristotle's method of classification in rhetorical studies, an effort on his part to bridge the divide between the dialectic and rhetoric, and 'normal science' in general, has been a particularly tough paradigm to disrupt. This is not because of Aristotle's work itself, but instead because of the way in which our interpretation of it has become a canon in of itself. The immense amount of scholarship that has been created on Aristotle's work for over 2000 years has accumulated and then formulated an immense boundary for scholars to traverse in questioning either the scholar or our understanding of his work.

Second, the allure of normal science's pursuit of certainty can be particularly compelling in the complicated realm of the political. When it comes to power, either economic or political, the stakes are high. The popularity of the aforementioned texts, scientific accounts of emotion, affirms the desire of political actors and scholars to make the ineffable of political life, i.e. pathetic discourse, definable and thus controllable. This pursuit is not in of itself bad, but it becomes problematic when certainty over the future of cognitive science leads us to ignore the productivity of rhetorical studies. Instead, it is scientists' hope and belief that they can succeed in efforts like cognitive psychology that have led them to ignore the power of rhetorical studies to the detriment of a better understanding of the power of pathetic reasoning.

Finally, we can attribute the recognition of this paradigm shift to the rapid changes in our technology over the past half a century. The Forum in Ancient Greece was an insular activity. The citizens, white property owning males, offered a homogenous cocoon within which to examine rhetorical action. Their rhetorical ruminations would not be televised; they would not contest with an electorate that had the possibility to democratize political actions through media such as social media. In Aristotle's time, political rhetoric was not a performance for the masses, it was an exercise reserved for the very few to ponder and deliberate. However, in modern times, political rhetoric has become highly democratized through social and technological changes like the Internet, cable television, as well as advancements in civil rights and citizenship. This phenomenon has led to a need to "go back to the drawing board" with respect to our understanding of how political rhetoric operates.

The proliferation of competing articulations, the willingness to try anything, the expression of explicit discontent, the recourse to philosophy and to debate over fundamentals, all of these are symptoms of a transition from normal to extraordinary research (Kuhn, 1996, p. 91).

According to Kuhn's work, the 'writing is on the wall' for a coming pathetic 'revolution.' Further, "It is as elementary prototypes for these transitions of the scientist's world that the familiar demonstrations of a switch in visual gestalt prove so suggestive. What were ducks in the scientist's world before the revolution are rabbits afterwards" (Kuhn, p. 111). These shifts in scientific paradigms will not happen without the imprints of political and cultural power throughout its trajectory. A critical rhetorical lens is essential so that later sections of this work can explore the role of power by assessing who in society benefits when we call it a duck and who benefits when we call it a rabbit.

To begin this examination I now turn to the work of charting a rhetorical path toward integrating pathos back into the graces of political discourse. To do this, I turn back to the fundamentals of Aristotelian classification, eschewing a modern interpretation of limitations placed on rhetorical devices and examine what Aristotle deemed, “the substance of rhetorical persuasion,” the enthymeme (1354a, 15). At issue is that although rhetoricians valued pathos, it was excluded from modes of reasoning as seen by the classification of the enthymeme as purely logical. This idea should be abandoned in favor of the utility of the pathetic enthymeme.

The Pathetic Enthymeme

In the previous section I argued in favor of an appreciation and better understanding of the role pathos plays in our political sphere, in this section I articulate a potentially productive method for accessing the power of pathos in rhetorical discourse. The enthymeme, a rhetorical device first codified and described by Aristotle, however ambiguously, is described as a “sort of syllogism,” and is more generally defined as an argument where one premise is not explicitly stated (Aristotle, 1355a, 6). Among modern rhetorical scholars, it has become common practice to situate the enthymeme in relation to logos (Delia, 1970; Grimaldi, 1972; Holmberg, 1977; Dyck, 2002; Braet, 2005). This became the *modus operandi* both because Aristotle placed the enthymeme within the realm of the logical but also because the enthymeme is a deductive form of reasoning and deduction is seen as rational in nature. This certitude persists despite the indeterminate nature of Aristotle’s conception of the enthymeme and has become so prevalent within rhetorical theory and pedagogy that it appears to have ascended to the point of

canonization, right alongside the Aristotle. In order to better understand the possibilities of the enthymeme, we must first examine literature that serves to free the enthymeme from its logos-centric confines.

The understanding of Aristotle's categorization of the enthymeme under the auspice of logos, despite no explicit statement of this in Aristotle's treatise, led to the device being sundered from the power of pathos. To rectify this requires a rearticulation of the syllogistic form that the enthymeme inhabits as always logos, and instead recognizing the pathetic form of the syllogism. In this endeavor, following the work of scholars like Fortenbaugh, Walker (1994) suggests that we look to the predecessors and contemporaries of Aristotle to gain scholarly and historical contextualization. The pursuit is particularly fruitful because based on our current logo-centric perspective; "We may be confined to a narrow concept of argumentation, and of rhetoric generally, by tending to subsume it under 'logic' of one kind or another, either syllogistic or Toulmainian" (1994, p. 48).

The root of the ancient Greek word *enthymema* is *thymos*, which is loosely translated into a definition that highlights emotions and desires related to a person's sense of justice and motive. "Thymos is, moreover, often linked to both the production and the reception of passional thought and eloquent, persuasive discourse," (Walker, 1994, p. 49). Walker takes this ideation further by arguing that there is a matter or intentionality congruent with the passions felt from *thymos*, i.e. feeling and pain. He names this strategic intention "kairotic inventiveness, "that is, an inventive responsive to what ancient rhetoricians called *kairos*, 'the opportune' at any given moment in a particular

rhetorical situation. Walker understands Isocrates' and Anaximenes of Lampusacus' articulations of enthymeme as operating similarly to the concept of "kairotic inventiveness."

"What Anaximenes's Rhetoric of Alexander offers is the fullest surviving presentation of a sophistic notion of enthymeme that is generally taken both to precede and to follow Aristotle's Rhetoric" (Walker, 1994, p. 49). In the Rhetoric of Alexander the enthymeme is defined as an emphatic statement that operates like an "argumentational cap" highlighting the contradictions at hand. "The audience is to feel not simply that the speaker's claims are true or probably, but that both speaker and claims are good and admirable (Walker, p. 50).

Although, Anaximenes was comfortable with the enthymeme being reducible to a form of *techne*, Isocrates was not. "Isocrates will not give us the satisfaction of a rigidly precise or systematic account of the enthymeme," because he is loathe to any reduction of rhetoric to pure *techne* or "exact knowledge" (1994, p. 49). This intransigence was likely ingrained by his sophistic education through teachers like the prolific Sophist and Gorgias (Matsen, Rollinson, & Sousa, 1990). Instead, Isocrates believes that enthymemes are at their best when they "seize the *kairos* of the moment to move the audience to a decisive recognition that is or seems 'lofty or original,' while at the same time 'cutting off' or shifting into the background other possible recognitions that may be latent in the buildup" (Walker, 1994, p. 52). Isocrates' conception draws in the notion of possible 'change' inherent to a broad view of *pathos*, while inferring the importance of the audience's participation within the *kairotic* moment.

Waddell (1990) argues in a similar manner, “the interaction between logos and pathos becomes clearer if we think of emotional appeals as enthymemes” (p. 390). Following Waddell’s line of argumentation, it would appear that his suggestion would reify pathos as a subject of logos due to its Aristotelian classification as a sort of syllogism. However, Waddell draws from Bitzer’s (1959) reconsideration of the enthymeme “which emphasizes the manner of construction of the enthymeme, rather than content, form or relation...I think this view succeeds in focusing upon the unique function of the enthymeme in rhetorical persuasion...its premises are always drawn from the audience” (p. 408). Bitzer’s articulation removes the rhetorical theorist from the task of classification of form and instead into the rhetorical function of the mechanics of persuasion. Put more plainly, a successful enthymeme cannot be constructed by a speaker in isolation fervently arranging a speech in the manner of a syllogism. Instead it is created within the rhetorical moment, “and if the speaker or writer misjudges, and the audience does not accept his or her premises or share the values inherent in them, the argument will collapse” (Waddell, 1990, p. 391).

The suppressed member of the syllogism can be made known through what Waddell describes as a post hoc “rational reconstruction,” which can also allow us to recognize the “parallel, pathetic conclusion” (p. 391). Take for instance, the rhetorical exigency in which President Obama argued for the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010:

Major premise: Everyone has basic human rights.

Minor premise: Healthcare is a human right.

Conclusion: Everyone should have access to healthcare.

In this example the audience, leading to a pathetic conclusion, supplied the major premise. From Waddell's standpoint, there is a parallel pathetic conclusion, the value of compassion being negotiated between the rhetor and the audience as seen through the following pathetic enthymeme:

Major premise: Everyone has a right to compassion
 Minor Premise: Universal healthcare is compassionate
 Conclusion: Everyone has a right to universal healthcare

Waddell makes a strong case to reexamine the way in which the enthymeme is classified as a sort of syllogism, in the terms of Aristotle. In addition, I suggest that a fruitful pursuit is to go back to Aristotle's original discussion of the enthymeme throughout the entirety of *The Rhetoric*. Specifically, his classification of the difference between a syllogism and what he articulates as an apparent syllogism.

With regard to the persuasion achieved by proof or apparent proof: just as in dialectic there is induction on the one hand and syllogism or apparent syllogism on the other, so it is in rhetoric. The example is an induction, the enthymeme is a syllogism, and the apparent enthymeme is an apparent syllogism. I call the enthymeme a rhetorical syllogism, and the example a rhetorical induction. Everyone who effects persuasion through proof does in fact use either enthymemes or examples: there is no other way. (Aristotle, 1356b 5)

Aristotle's parsing of the enthymeme through the dissection of the term into a rhetorical syllogism is instructive because it offers an entrance into the potential of the pathetic enthymeme through his theoretical bridge. An extension of this idea underscores the contemporary significance of this move as the rhetorical syllogism is presented as a compromise with limitations and so mirrors the philosophical means that have historically been utilized to constrain the rhetorical potential of women. Women's voices were relegated to the private sphere because they were accused of being imbued with

pathos and so functionally irrational. Affording rationality to pathos can be extended to obliterate this line of argument and afford greater access for women into public discourse. In the following section I bring in the context of the rhetoric of the Office of the First Lady as a symbolic site for the state of womanhood in order to further investigate the pathetic potential of the enthymeme in action.

The Pathetic First Lady

In a similar manner to how traditional understandings of political decision-making have worked to demarcate pathetic appeals from the realm of the rational, so too have understandings of women's relation to pathetic rhetoric worked to limit their access to the rational realm of discourse. As previously argued in Chapter One, the marginalization of women in the political sphere primarily operates through their restriction to the pathetic, and thus private sphere. This argument gains further nuance through Fortenbaugh who argues Aristotle attempted to avoid the charge of hypocrisy with respect to women and pathos through his differentiation of slaves, children, and women. "Slaves are said to possess the deliberative faculty not at all; women are said to possess it, but *abkuron*; and children are said to possess it incompletely (1260a,12-14)" (p. 58). By stating that women's capability for deliberative faculty is *abkuron*, he means, "to say it lacks authority and is easily overruled," (Fortenbaugh, 1975, p. 60). Basically, Aristotle's circular logic with respect to women comes down to "a woman has reason, but it does not prevail in the society of men" (p. 59). In other words, women may have the capacity for reason and emotion, but emotion will obscure the rational capability of women. Aristotle appears to give no other support except that it is in society's interest.

In modern politics in the United States this phenomenon is prominently illuminated through the Office of the First Lady (OFL). I noted earlier in Chapter One, Anderson (2005) argues that, “by virtue of their husbands’ elections, first ladies become ‘sites’ for the symbolic negotiation of female identity,” which ultimately works to both “foster and constrain women’s agency” (p.2). These rhetorical limitations are readily seen in the power dynamics between the Offices’ of the President and the First Lady. The OFL offers a rhetorical space for a first lady to act, but one in which she is expected to limit that performance to the parameters of ideal womanhood and femininity in the United States.

Parry-Giles and Blair (2002) explained that the rise of the rhetorical first lady was in part driven by the rise in the rhetorical presidency. They point out that it became more common for first ladies to speak out on the public stage starting in the 1920’s, coinciding with the rise of the first-wave of feminism and the movement for suffrage. Further, the authors argue that you can chart the evolution of the role through the transition of first ladies acting as “benevolent volunteer,” “republican mother,” to a modern day role in which a first lady has the option to take on the role of a “national voice for civic socialization” (pp. 574-577).

While many scholars (Campbell, 1998; Borelli, 2001; Parry-Giles & Blair, 2002; Watson, 2003; Wertheimer, 2004; Anderson, 2004; Schwalbe, 2005; Spillars, 2009; Anderson, 2011, Borrelli, 2011; Natalie & Simon, 2015) in the last thirty years have come to accept the importance of studying the Office of the First Lady, two prominent controversies persist. The first is the issue of OFL’s legitimacy to the presidency and the

potential power that position offers. Second, a first lady will consistently find herself under panoptic surveillance related to the appropriateness of her display.

In the case of legitimacy, this controversy primarily centers on the perception that the first lady's relationship to power is sexual in nature due to her marriage to the President originally presented in Chapter One. This situation spurs patriarchy's fears of female sexuality and presents a symbol on which this fear is given room to coalesce, the first lady. This fear is magnified because the OFL is not an elected position and so her proximity to the president provokes fear of her influence.

Scholars like Vasby Anderson (2005) argue that the OFL maintains her power through the potential for civic representation. She supports this argument by pointing to past first ladies that "have been able to confound the ambiguities latent in gender dichotomies by developing paradox in ways that deconstruct female identity and open possibilities for political agency" (Anderson, 2005, p. 2). Essentially, a first lady maintains agency through the degree that she mirrors or challenges prevailing notions of femininity. This creates a paradox that the audience is left to resolve. The legitimacy question can then be resolved if the audience comes to view her as a legitimate representation of themselves.

Another prominent controversy concerns the 'appropriate' position of a first lady with respect to the presidential administration, namely, should we consider the presidency a two-person career? The answer to this question has governmental and rhetorical implications. From a governmental perspective, if the OFL is legitimated as the 'partner of the president,' our very understanding of the distribution of power in the

government will come into question. Rhetorically, presenting the first lady as a ‘partner’ to the president challenges the gender dynamics being represented by the president and first lady. Essentially, if the first lady is equal to the president with respect to power and on such a prominent stage, then why aren’t all American women afforded the same position? Watson (1997) argues in favor because “Not only is her office budget and staff larger than many of the so-called ‘key’ advisors and institutions that presidential scholars study, but as presidential spouse she assumes a role perhaps more central to the president’s career and White House success than any formal advisor.” However, Troy (2000) is a prominent critic of this approach:

Most Americans do not want the first couple sharing power in the White House. Moreover, the manner in which the job of first lady has evolved over the past few decades actually hinders a first lady’s effectiveness in the policy-making role. Presidential couples are supposed to work together on joint image-making, not power-sharing. Presidents have learned that a popular first lady can provide cheap and easy political points and are an essential prop in defining the presidential image. Regardless of her prospective positives, a controversial first lady can do a great deal more in lasting damage.

Troy’s move to limit the first lady from power to a function of “image-making” assumes that image-making is meaningless. My argument is that “image-making” is still a position of power in the form of the pathetic. Image-making derives its power from the pathetic enthymeme. It is the construction of the image that the first lady is involved in creating that has the potential to act as a suppressed member of rationalized and pathetic syllogism. Finnegan illuminates this process by arguing, “the power of the enthymeme lies in the fiction that its unstated premise, at once invisible and transparent, is ‘natural’ rather than context-bound; it is something that ‘everybody knows’” (2005, p. 34). The

rhetorical power of the OFL operates in a similar manner to Finnegans' articulation of the enthymeme.

The OFL's visibility, caught in the paradox of living a private life on a public stage, has the potential to operate as an unstated premise, because of the 'natural,' or ordinary being performed on an extraordinary stage. Whether it is her celebrating a holiday as the host of the White House Easter Egg Hunt, lighting the Christmas tree, or decorating the White House, the first lady performs these duties, common in American households on a national stage. Her performance becomes symbolic as a representation of the American people.

Further, the performance can be unstated in that her 'goodness' i.e. adherence to dominant conceptions of womanhood, may lend credence to the masculinity of the president. It could also serve to challenge the prevailing dichotomy between the masculinity and femininity as some first ladies have done. For example, in the 1992 presidential election Hillary Clinton famously quipped "I guess I could have stayed home and baked cookies and had teas, but what I decided to do was fulfill my profession which I entered before my husband was in public life" (Walter, 2012). The fact that so many in the media and beyond were so critical of that comment from Hillary Clinton reveals the importance of the first lady managing the double-bind on a national stage for her potential success.

All of this is not to say that the Office of the First Lady lacks agency for making change between the masculine-feminine dynamics in the White House and beyond. There is much rhetorical power at stake when a first lady disrupts the 'unstated premise' and

forces us to engage with the validity of that premise. Basically, the first lady walks on a continual tightrope in which she must adhere to standard practices of femininity to remain relevant, while also maintaining the potential power to disrupt that narrative. Essential to this tightrope walk is that the performance of a first lady has the power to engage the audience in the rhetorical act of a pathetic enthymeme and with it the possibility of redefinition of social norms in the process. It is the very visuality, both the ordinary and extraordinary nature, of her role that invokes constituents' doxa and with it their pathetic cognition in an enthymematic manner.

It is through her employment of social political style that her enthymematic potential becomes salient. The rhetorical strength of her style lies in her potential to involve the audience in the articulation of the pathetic enthymeme. This is distinct from the primary rhetorical force of the president's primarily logos-centric argumentation style, because her use of the pathetic enthymeme allows her to access the negotiation of the values that undergird the logos-centric argument. This is not to suggest a hierarchy in that pathos will be subsumed by logos, but instead to place pathetic argumentation on an equal plane with logos-centric argument. Vasby Anderson suggests a potential for liberation through the social political style, "Consequently, a third component of the social style is that it enacts political power while disguising its nature as political. In this way, the social style invokes the realist style's artistry disguised by professional artlessness," (p. 9).

CHAPTER 3 THE FIRST LADY IN THE COURT OF PATHETIC POLITICS

The past two chapters work to support the overarching idea that the denigration of the pathetic realm was purposeful and a tool for ruling classes to maintain their status of

the people. In this chapter I explore the historical precedents of this form of power by investigating the pathetic realm as understood through the concept of courtly politics.

The Office of the First Lady is imbued in contradiction derived from the intersection of the public and the private realms of corporeal rhetoric. Vasby Anderson (2005) explains that many first ladies have developed acumen for what she conceives of as a “social style” that gives a first lady access to political agency without violating norms of femininity. This social political style is drawn from Hariman’s (1995) theory of political style defined as “a coherent repertoire of rhetorical conventions depending on aesthetic reactions for political effect...and identifies four styles prominent in male-dominated political spheres: realist, republican, courtly, and bureaucratic” (p. 13).

Most impactful for understanding the first lady as enthymeme is that Anderson conceives of the social style of the first lady as being a combination of Hariman’s conception of republican style that “privileges rhetoric, operates from consensus, and draws power from heroic mythos,” (pp. 95-140) and courtly style wherein “roles of decorum are sovereign attention is focused on the body, and speech is suppressed” (pp. 51-94). Vasby Anderson describes the social style as a combination of, “From the courtly style it draws a focus on decorum, minimization of speech, and attention to the body...From the republican style the social style garners an emphasis on consensus, efforts to foster a constituent base, and the standard of civic virtue” (2005, p. 9). It is the combination from this interaction of these two political styles wherein the audience is provoked into enthymematic action. In this social style, the first lady is drawn to the visual, because her speech is often suppressed. However, the republican elements of style

offer her a significant role in representation due to her charge of fostering a constituent base and acting as a standard and site of negotiation for American civic virtue.

In Robert Hariman's 1995 work, *Political Style: The Artistry of Power*, he argues, "the human sciences have had difficulty comprehending the aesthetic dimensions of political experience," (p. Back Matter). My project suggests that this difficulty is largely due to academic's insistence on omitting or overlooking the influence of the pathetic in the political realm. In this chapter I examine the pathetic by looking at the body as a site wherein pathos coalesces through the impact of visibility and proximity. Overlooking the influence of pathos, rhetoricians generally fail to account for the role of the body in areas such as the rhetorical presidency. Stuckey 2010 explains, "Certainly, it is true that power plays out through people's bodies, [but] there is very little work grounded in the rhetorical presidency that brings bodies to the forefront," (2010, p. 44). In this chapter, I attempt to answer that summons by examining the way in which First Lady Michelle Obama's rhetoric accesses the pathetic through the body, and how that accomplishment can be explained through the lens of Hariman's theory of courtly politics.

Hariman argues that ignoring the aesthetic in political experience is limiting to scholars and politicians alike in that it averts our eyes from the way in which pathos, as practiced through a 'courtly style' connected to the body, is a constant force within modern day democracies. In this process pathos is tied to the courtly style and by extension to social style:

A discourse can persist after its 'original' social structure collapses, and the rhetorical critic has to consider how that discourse can continue to influence

people. Too often, the effect of both historical analysis of Western courts and anthropological study of traditional societies is to lock courtliness into a foreign institution and a distant time and place. (Hariman, *Political Style: The Artistry of Power*, 1995)

Although the original social structure, the courts of monarchical rule, has fallen out of favor the, vestiges of courtly politics remain. In courtly politics power was derived from a political actor's proximate position to the body of the sovereign. The details of this shift will be further examined throughout the work in this chapter. I argue that the body's rhetorical power is one such vestige that has persevered through the rise of democracy by shifting its locus from being derived from 'around' the body to being 'in' the body. In other words, in modern political structures it is 'in' the body or the corporeal that courtly politics thrive.

Charting the shift of this rhetorical power is done through an examination of Michel Foucault's concept of biopower within the framework of Hariman's articulation of courtly style and the repercussions of that shift on modern political actors. Foucault argues that post the fall of monarchies as a dominant form of governance, modern governments have turned from an era of regulating the body through death to an era, "characterized [by] a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through," (1990, p. 139). Essentially, governance turned toward the work of regulating the "conduct of conduct," of bodies (Crossley, 1996, p. 105). For Foucault this era is further characterized by "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of 'bio-power,'" (1990, p. 140). In modern society there are numerous examples of the government attempting to exert control over the "conduct of

conduct” of bodies. Some recent examples include government sponsored healthcare programs such as Michelle Obama’s anti-obesity campaign, proposed taxes on foods deemed unhealthy, as well as debates surrounding the availability of reproductive healthcare for women.

It is in the reconciliation of courtly style and biopower that the need to identify a political expression of pathetic politics can be examined. Hariman’s concept of the power inherent to courtly style relies on the governing structure of a monarchy. However, Hariman’s work leaves off at monarchy and on its own does not explain what happens to the power of courtly politics when monarchies fall to new systems of democratic rule. I draw from the rhetoric of First Lady Michelle Obama for this analysis primarily because of the source of her particular position within the administration. The woman that inhabits the Office of the First Lady gains that position and the rhetorical potential that goes with it, wholly because of her proximity to the president and in the same manner described in courtly politics. As I have noted in previous chapters, she is not elected and she has no prescribed duties by any government document including the Constitution. However, in the modern democratic structure of the government of the United States she is the number one purveyor of courtly style in the country. She exists in the peculiar position Kathleen Jamieson Hall calls the ‘double bind,’ meaning that she is called on to act privately publicly (Jamieson, 1995). For female politicians this bind means that they are required to act masculine to gain power, but that requirement undermines their femininity. For the first lady the conundrum is different in that she is allowed to act feminine, really expected to, but that expression of femininity precludes her from acting

as a politician within the logos-centric world of presidential politics. However, given recent technological advancements that rely on visuality, like cable news and the Internet, the pathetic power becomes more closely associated with the visual and the body as biopower becomes more accepted. The significant potential of this body rhetoric is that it might allow her to move out of a place where her power is solely based on the president, and instead may be expressed as her own.

Political Power in the Court and Beyond

Hariman explains the utilization of courtly style in a historical framework as he begins in times of monarchial rule. In this time courtly style is formulated as a mode of protection against the precariousness of court life, for both the sovereign and the people. An effective measure for protecting the body of a sovereign was to dismember it, in order to allow loyalists to provide additional guardianship. “Courtly politics differs from other political cultures by its emphasis on the body of the monarch, and in this symbolic system the king usually benefits from further division of his body into parts mortal and mystic,” (Hariman, *Political Style: The Artistry of Power*, 1995). This process of protection is notably explained through the doctrine of the ‘King’s Two Bodies,’ a passage said to have been offered by lawyers of Elizabeth I:

The King has in him two Bodies, viz., a Body natural, and a Body politic. His body Natural (if it be considered in itself) is a Body mortal, subject to all Infirmities that come by nature or accident, to the Imbecility of Infancy or old Age...but his Body politic is a body that cannot be seen or handled, consisting of Policy and Government. (Hariman, *Political Style: The Artistry of Power*, 1995, p. 58)

The people navigated the constant jeopardy of courtly life by adhering to certain standards communicated by the sovereign and performed by surrounding courtiers.

Knowledge of the framework of decorum was essential for courtiers as they spent their days operating in the presence of an entity that could have their life taken for any reason a sovereign deems necessary. “Rather than merely ornamenting power, at court the rules of decorum serve as the primary means for accomplishing the essential task of any political system: regulating subordinate behavior without force,” (p. 55). Courtiers were compelled to conduct their bodies in decorous ways amenable to the king because of the constant pressure of their visual presence in front of the sovereign. “The courtiers exemplified both the general rule that bodily control is an expression of social control, and a specific form of social control that makes the decorous body the sign of order, and speech the sign of disorder,” (p. 62).

Hariman allows Michel Foucault to summarize the issue, “In a society like that of the seventeenth century, the King’s body wasn’t a metaphor, but a political reality. Its physical presence was necessary for the functioning of the monarchy,” (p. 59). Essentially, “power was measured [in courtly life] by proximity to the body of the king,” (Hariman, *Political Style: The Artistry of Power*, 1995, p. 59). Finally, Hariman draws from Foucault to explain how exertion of decorum further exceeds ornamentation as, “the embodiment of power beginning with the monarch generates the micropolitics of the social system,” (p. 60).

Hariman and Foucault’s articulations of the expression of political power intersect in the decorous body in court, but Foucault’s philosophical objective diverges in trying to understand how power is exerted post-monarchy. The central thesis to Foucault’s theory is encapsulated in a term he coined “biopower,” literally meaning “power over bodies,”

However, it is best explained as the combination of power and life, which leaves open the preposition that has traditionally linked them, “of/over/through/by.” Contrary to the time of the monarchy wherein the body of the sovereign and people were held to standards of decorum, Foucault argues that post-monarchy that power, “never operated in the same manner as the King’s body under the monarchy. On the contrary, it’s the body of society which becomes the new principle in the nineteenth century,” (1980, p. 55). As the power shifts from the body of the sovereign into the bodies of the general public, it does so through the controlling mechanism of surveillance of the general public. Foucault utilizes the concept of the Panopticon to explain this form of surveillance, “Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power, (1995, p. 201). Unique to the Panopticon is the potential that anyone can use it, “The Panopticon is a marvelous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogenous effects of power,” (1995, p. 202).

The justification for this exercise of power is that post-monarchy, the social body needs protection from itself, “In place of the rituals that served to restore the corporeal integrity of the monarch, remedies and therapeutic devices are employed such as the segregation of the sick, the monitoring of contagions, the exclusion of delinquents,” (1980, p. 55). Foucault’s conception of bio-power as a social and political force has been rightly celebrated for its explanatory power in post monarchical societies. However, Foucault does not discuss what happens to courtly style as monarchical power fades. It is in this space that I argue the place of courtly style in a biopower regime exists in appeals

to the body. The OFL is a productive place to see this phenomenon, as the Office of the President resembles the king in a monarchy, so the power of the OFL is that of the court. But in a post monarchical world the OFL accesses biopower, taking the body and imbuing it with life. This process is done through the visual body, which operates rhetorically as pathetic argument.

Drawing from selected interviews and other writings compiled and published in 1980 as *Power/Knowledge*, states that sources of power never fully dissolve “the impression that power weakens and vacillates here is in fact mistaken; power can retreat here, re-organize its forces, invest itself elsewhere...and so the battle continues,” (p. 56). I argue that the ‘here’ where this proximal, power via proximity to the monarch, power re-organizes is within the dimensions of recent advancements of the mass media. Essentially, Hariman and Foucault come into productive conversation when we accept the premise that the rhetorical power of ‘around’ the body from courtly style and the rhetorical power placed ‘in’ the body as articulated through biopower may exist simultaneously in our modern political environments. Further, there is a potential for a tie to ethos as drawn from the combination of pathos and logos, but it is pathos that is the driving force.. In the next section I examine these claims by looking to the details of a first lady situated in courtly style political life. I primarily focus on the first lady’s rhetorical use of the transformation of rhetorical power, derived from being ‘around’ the body of the president, into an expression of her own power structured by the biopolitics of her initiatives.

The First Lady In and Out of Court

In our republican democracy a first lady stands as the number one purveyor of courtly politics through her visibility and access to the president. As Hariman explains, “TV stories must have pictures, and accounts of presidential action usually are presented through pictures of the president, so that increasingly the disposition of the president’s body comes to stand for executive action,” (p. 92). This observation illuminates the modern day need for dismemberment and partitioning of the presidential body. Basically, our ability to survey has outmatched an individual president’s ability to provide imagery for that surveillance. Given the continual complexity of the role of the president, the need for a surrogate to fill the visual void left by his absence is exacerbated. The Office of the First Lady stands as a prominent means to fill that visual void.

As the First Lady embarks on embodying the role of courtier, her capacity for visuality related to her physical body becomes paramount, “When power is concentrated in the body, then it must be distributed through the body,” (p. 65). The rhetorical importance of this distribution of courtly style has three primary contentions: that it still exists, it is a means to organize the meaning of political experience, and “to the extent that it operates as a pattern of identification within the mass media, the style coalesces around the metonymic representations of beautiful or powerful bodies,” (Hariman, *Political Style: The Artistry of Power*, p. 78).

For Hariman, this is all, “an example of postmodern culture in action: The premodern practice re-emerges in modern life through propagation by the mass media, but in fragmented form that characterizes no specific social structure yet becomes a dimension of media production itself,” (p. 53). In modern day political life in the United

States Hariman located these fragmented forms outside of realist political theories of government. He argues that courtly style entails a generative principle of hierarchy that is most active in the following discursive locales:

Three sites of courtliness seem prominent: celebrity culture, particularly in the entertainment industry but also including figures from government and business [for reasons that should not be mysterious]; advertising, particularly as it involves images of the female body; and the American presidency. (pp. 79-80)

Courtly style is particularly adept in offering an entrance into how a first lady is able to draw from rhetoric related to her own body and the body of her husband. In terms of courtly style, this rhetoric has the potential to capture the collective imagination of the citizenry. Hariman explains, a fixation on the body in the political realm “confers great appeal and authority on the actor while it provides the audience with a vocabulary for understanding the micropolitics of gestural empowerment,” (p. 83). Notably, he states that there is an ancillary advantage for the executive in conferring body rhetoric to a surrogate in that, “courtly roles and responses that would be considered dangerous or embarrassing in deliberations of policy provide effective means for controlling a realm of collective imagination, (p. 87). This gives further credence to the utility of accessing power as it is disseminated through proximity to the body of the president.

While first ladies have regularly been known to draw celebrities to the vicinity of the president through official state functions, Michelle Obama’s affiliation with celebrity culture is unique in form and function in her utilization of body rhetoric to enhance her personal ethos.

There is no shortage of examples of Michelle Obama drawing on celebrity culture in pursuit of her initiatives. For the purpose of this analysis I draw from two primary

political spectacles that drew both celebration and condemnation from the public. The first of these is Michelle Obama's connection to famed singer Beyoncé Knowles

The Obama's admiration for Beyoncé as a performer first became apparent when she was tapped to sing at the Inaugural Ball for President Obama in 2009. Since then, Beyoncé has made regular appearances in support of Michelle Obama's first lady initiatives as well as singing the national anthem at Obama's second inauguration in 2012. Analysis of two prominent visual performances of the women reveal an aesthetic that has the potential to merge the ethos of one with the other.

In 2011 Beyoncé released a music video for the song 'Move Your Body,' in support of Michelle Obama's 'Let's Move!' anti-obesity campaign. The video was released through the Let's Move campaign as part of a coordinated effort with middle schools to promote fitness 'flash dances' all over the country. The video largely serves an instructional function as the viewer is asked to learn the moves that the dancers, led by Beyoncé, are performing. As the school children come into formation behind Beyoncé their bodies are on display dancing in obedience to the lyrics of the song:

I ain't worried doing me tonight, A little sweat ain't never hurt nobody, Don't just stand there on the wall, Everybody just move your body, (jump, jump, jump, jump, jump, jump, jump, jump, jump, jump) (Beyonce Knowles Lyrics, 2016)

The lyrics culminate in the chanting of "Wave the American Flag!" while the dancers continue to move their bodies back and forth (Beyonce Knowles Lyrics, 2016). The comingling of Beyoncé's visual presence and rhetoric commonly utilized in Michelle Obama's anti-obesity campaign presents a slippage in which the First Lady may draw from Beyoncé's ethos.

This would not be the last time that the rhetoric of the two women would be joined to achieve a level of conjoined ethos. In 2016 Michelle Obama appeared on a segment of talk show host James Corden's "Carpool Karaoke," in which she sang along with Corden to one of Beyoncé's most famous songs, "Single Ladies." The politics of this moment did not go unnoticed by the media but was nevertheless hailed as propaganda done right:

It's one little anecdote that does so much: remind us of...their relatability as parents, as teenagers, as people who love belting Beyoncé on their commute. The exchange also provides a near metaphor for what Michelle Obama has done with this instantly viral Late Late Show segment. She's technically in the passenger seat, but really, she's driving the car, (Kornhaber, 2016).

Although this segment operates inversely to the music video as viewers encounter the visual of Michelle Obama, singing and dancing to the words of Beyoncé, the result is a similar sort of shared ethos.

In 2012 Michelle Obama put her physical display and competitiveness on display by engaging in a series of push-up challenges with celebrities. In the first even the First Lady accepted the challenge from daytime talk show host Ellen DeGeneres to a push-up competition on her television talk show *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*. Michelle handily won the competition completing 25 push-ups to best DeGeneres. This display of her physicality was framed by many in the media as an example of her embodying her initiatives. "The First Lady Michelle Obama isn't blowing hot air when she stumps on the importance of physical fitness. She proved Wednesday that she's got the moves to back it up," (Dwyer, 2012).

However, not everyone was pleased with her performance. The media outlet The Huffington Post reported that for some voters, her actions violated a level of decorum they expect from a first lady. The interviewee explained, “I don’t like his wife. She’s far from the first lady. It’s about time we get a first lady in there that acts like a first lady, and looks like a first lady...I mean, can you imagine you know, Kennedy’s or the Bushes or anybody doing push-ups on the floor? I mean you know. That’s just not a first lady,” (Michelle Obama 'Doesn't Look or Act' Like a First Lady, says Virginia Voter Bobbie Lussier, 2012). In this statement are two primary arguments that both revolve around audience expectations of decorum. First, that she doesn’t look like a first lady, the interviewee goes so far as to state that she ‘She’s far from the first lady,’ questioning drawing on Michelle’s visuality as negating her role as first lady. Second, the statement infers that Michelle abiding to an appropriate level of decorum seen in previous images of members of presidential administrations. When prompted by the interviewer as to whether her statement has racial undertones, the interviewee responded, “It’s [an issue of] respect...for being in the White House,” (Michelle Obama 'Doesn't Look or Act' Like a First Lady, says Virginia Voter Bobbie Lussier, 2012).

Hariman explains, “At court, any interruption of critique of pomp can be subversive, for the rules of decorum are sovereign, and the courtier’s success or failure depends on continually discerning the shifting applications of the social code governing all conduct,” (1995, p. 54). It is in this supposed subversion of decorum that the First Lady’s proximal power to the president has great utility in justifying her own expression of power. For other courtiers not legally wed to the president, their proximity to the body

of the president is subject to continual evaluation. Given the constant prominence of images of the President and the First Lady both before and after these events lends credence to her performance as not a violation of decorum but the emergence of a new decorum.

With respect to the manner through which power is disseminated through the body of the sovereign and surrounding courtiers, of this process Hariman explains:

Thus, a second displacement occurs, which is perfectly suited to the purpose of the persuasive practice: the courtesan's body becomes a substitute for the king within the realm of representation, the new receptacle for the power flowing through the social order, not entirely an order of desire and consumption. That is, within the realm of advertising, the image of a woman's body becomes the symbolic form for concentration and distrusting a great flow of social energy. (p. 89)

Of the many venues offered to a first lady for representation, appearances on magazine covers, and within them in full-page spreads, is one of the most common. In terms of breadth and frequency, Michelle Obama's tenure as first lady stands out for her success gracing the covers of magazines. Since 2014:

Obama's list of magazine covers in the past five years includes *Vogue* (twice), *People*, *Reader's Digest*, *Parade*, *Parents*, *Good Housekeeping*, *AARP*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *More*, *Glamour*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Prevention*, *Ebony* and *Better Homes and Gardens*. The list is nearly endless. She's even been illustrated on the cover of *The New Yorker*, (Newman, 2014).

Although Michelle eventually gained success on the covers of magazines she had a notably rocky start with this medium during the 2008 election cycle. In July of 2008 *The New Yorker* magazine ran an image on their cover depicting the First Lady dressed in all black, sporting an afro hairstyle, and a Kalashnikov rifle over her shoulder giving a fist bump to her husband, dressed as Osama Bin Laden, in the Oval Office of the White

House. Hariman explains that in courtly politics gestural images are important, “As an individual becomes individuated through a gesture-cocking an eyebrow, pointing a figure, licking the upper lip—the body part becomes a form of focal knowledge,” (p. 81). For Michelle, the gesture of the fist bump would become connected to her, providing some with the ‘knowledge’ that she is radical in her politics. However, subsequent appearances across a range of periodicals worked to counter this particular type of social knowledge.

While the editor of the magazine defended the cover explaining that it is a parody of extremist fears about the couple, the magazine cover became a rallying point for Obama’s detractors as it offered a space for their fears to coalesce. A primary contention undergirding this fear is that Michelle is the more dominant member in her marriage. Michelle is depicted dressed in all black and in a style that is commonly attributed to the Black Power movement. The anger culturally over-associated with that movement is placed on Michelle and fuels a perception of her as the stereotypical ‘angry black woman.’ Hariman argues that initial fear to female power is common in the courtly style:

Woman’s power is first dispersed and has to be reconcentrated; man’s power begins concentrated and may be dispersed. Furthermore, as fragmented bodies become more common, the whole body becomes threatening, a potentially dangerous concentration of power.” (p. 91)

This consideration of gender, body, and power is important because it speaks to the common tactic of attacking women who seek power by attacking their body as unfit to manage that power. Whether it is a pundit’s comment that a woman is too emotional due to her hormones, too distracting because of her looks, or too unhealthy because of her

age, attacking a woman for the state of her body is a common refrain in the political realm.

A 2015 examination by *Time* magazine on the evolution of Michelle Obama's magazine covers is a prime artifact to chart the way her political persona has responded to early criticisms. The *Time*'s piece highlights 15 magazine covers starting in 2008 with a central introductory theme. A 2008 cover of *Radar* magazine challenges their readers with an unsmiling image of Michelle from the shoulders up with the headline, "What's so scary about Michelle Obama?" *Ebony* and *Newsweek* magazine followed with covers showing a smiling Michelle Obama with headlines claiming to reveal the "real Michelle Obama" (See the Evolution of Michelle Obama in Magazine Covers, 2015).

After Obama's successful election in November of 2008, the covers featuring Michelle Obama start to take a different tone. In 2009 *Vogue* featured a cover of Michelle with the headline, "Michelle Obama, The first lady that the world's been waiting for." What is notable about the accompanying image is that it depicts Michelle in a low power nonverbal stance. Michelle is depicted lounging on a chair in the White House with a soft smile and a hand holding her neck. In nonverbal terms, the position of holding your neck is largely considered a very low power stance. Overall, the cover can be read as an attempt to visually connect Michelle with the image of a first lady as unassuming, soft, and feminine. It is around the time of the *Vogue* magazine cover in 2009 that *New York Magazine* releases an edition with a smiling face of Michelle looking off into the distance and a headline stating, "The Power of Michelle Obama, From terrorist fist bumper to American icon in eight months flat." The first lady-style feminization of Michelle Obama

is complete. In terms of courtly style Michelle Obama's power had been contested and dispersed primarily through visuals related to her body only to be reconstituted into an unthreatening and traditional frame of what a first lady should be.

In 2010, with her cultural ethos and resulting poll numbers at a high, a thematic shift begins when Michelle announced her anti-obesity campaign. A 2010 cover of *Newsweek* magazine featured Michelle in pearls sitting behind what appears to be a desk and an apple in front of her; overall she offers the impression that she is a teacher with a headline that reads, "Feed your children well." In each subsequent year, a magazine cover is represented that connects emerging initiatives from her office. In 2012, boosting the confidence of your girls is referenced, in 2013, her role as Mom-in-Chief continues with a headline in *Essence* magazine, "Michelle Obama, Her secret to raising smart kids." In 2014, Michelle's image is on the cover of *Redbook* magazine with a headline framing her request to "Help our female veterans." Finally, in 2015 Michelle is on the cover of *Cooking Light* magazine eating some presumably healthy dish with the text surrounding her stating, "Michelle Obama celebrates the fifth anniversary of Let's Move!"

Taken together, the headlines referenced above depict the various sites from which Michelle Obama managed to derive power. The first two years of Michelle's time in the spotlight focus on shaping her position relative to the president. Common thematic elements include defending and constructing her public image as non-threatening and in line with traditional expectations of first ladies. However, the trajectory shifts into a reconcentration of her power in 2010 with the announcement of her first initiative and thus the beginning of her expression of power derived from her own body. Magazine

covers gradually started portraying her in bolder colors, with a confident smile, and eventually framing not only her face but also her entire body as a source for possible appreciation by the American people. In Hariman's terms, the changing styles of these covers coincide with the mass media in the "metonymic representations of beautiful or powerful bodies," (p. 78). Depiction of her body, particularly depictions of her body displaying physical strength appear to have had the potential to replace the fist bump as a component of gestural knowledge surrounding the first lady. Essentially, her strength became a visual representation of her source of political power, her body.

To some extent each first lady is free to construct her position as related to her own goals, the goals of her spouse, and attributes of her personality. Within this individuality rhetorical scholars have managed to identify a few discursive trends available to first ladies that include acting as 'national mother,' 'benevolent volunteer,' etc. (Parry-Giles & Blair, *The Rise of the Rhetorical First Lady: Politics, Gender Ideology, and Women's Voice, 1789-2002*, 2002). Further, examination of a first lady's rhetorical potential as connected to the rhetoric of the president is consistently a lucrative site for analysis. Hariman explains, "The courtly style provides a mode of political expression that communicates the experience of power, and it equips a group to locate, track, and contain specific forms of persuasive skills and to identify the role of customs, status, emotions, and taste in executive decision-making," (Hariman, *Political Style: The Artistry of Power*, 1995, p. 94). Further, as the third of the discursive realms that Hariman cites as productive sites for courtly style, the American Presidency is the most direct. A prominent interview that the First Lady and President Obama emphasizes the way the

President positions the First Lady in relation to public policy, which moves pathetic politics into the public space traditionally reserved for logos centered deliberation.

In the beginning of his second term as president, the President and Michelle Obama sat down for an interview with Vogue Magazine. From the start of the article Michelle is rhetorical positioned on an even plane with the President as the first line explains that the couple will speak about, “their life as parents, their marriage, and their vision for America’s families,” (Van Meter, 2014). As the first couple enters the room for the interview the photographer is quoted as pointing out, “there’s a lot of hugging going on [between the first couple]...You’re a very different kind of president and First Lady,” (Van Meter, 2014). The magazine would mimic their display of physical closeness in the images accompanying the article. In the primary image the President is sitting in a chair and Michelle stands behind him embracing him in a hug from behind the chair.

From Hariman’s perspective, this visual intimacy may be setting the stage for expression of the Obamas’ political philosophy, “at some point a political style can be understood as the artistic expression of a political theory,” (p. 71). President Obama’s political philosophy is portrayed by detailing his governing style in a manner that positions Michelle as a partner in that endeavor:

Well, I’ll tell you, says President Obama, his wife looking at him with a beatific smile as our interview winds down, ‘everything we have done has been viewed through the lens of family. And I mean family broadly conceived...Beyond just the immediate family to the larger American family, and making sure everybody’s included and making sure that everybody’s got a seat at the table. (Van Meter, 2014)

While it is a popular trope in presidential rhetoric to speak in communal sentiments, what is rhetorically significant is when the President goes on to apply this governing metaphor of family to specific accounts of public policy:

The work I did in the first couple of years to make sure we didn't go into a Great Depression—that was family policy...making sure people have jobs, making sure the economy is working, making sure that people's savings aren't dissipating—those have all been family policy as well. (Van Meter, 2014)

Taking into account President Obama Michelle Obama's assertion that she will be 'Mom-in-Chief' upon her ascendancy to the position of First Lady, and coupling it with President Obama's framing of his public policy through the lens of family, rhetorically stations the First Lady with a more substantial relationship to public policy than previously assumed. This is not to suggest she has an objectively equal influence on policy, but it is to suggest that President Obama sees her role as having some use related to his own policy. Hariman offers an explanation for the rhetorical utility of the first lady, "courtly roles and responses that would be considered dangerous or embarrassing in deliberations of policy provide effective means for controlling a realm of collective imagination," (p. 87). Applying Hariman's prescription to Obama's political philosophy could suggest that the role of first lady, a position that has a great access to pathetic politics via the courtly style, is another plane of deliberation that the first lady is particularly adept at engaging.

Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter supports the primary thesis that the proximal power derived from 'around' the body of the sovereign does not disappear in the transition from monarchical rule to the biopower of the populace. Instead it becomes part of a transition of

power ‘around’ the body to power ‘in’ the body. In terms of biopower this happens through a method of surveillance that is available to all equally within a republican style democracy. In terms of the Office of the First Lady this transition can be seen through her leveraging her proximal power to the body of the president in a manner that builds pathetic rhetorical power in her own body. Further, it reveals how the Office of the First Lady is uniquely situated to access this pathetic realm of politics. However, as Hariman warns, there is a potential downside to this rhetorical conversion, “These fluid transpositions could be typical of how the courtly style operates outside of any institutional structure, and of how its separation from governmental functions has been coincident with its becoming aligned with feminine representation,” (Hariman, *Political Style: The Artistry of Power*, 1995, p. 86). In Chapter Four I look to a case study of the visual imagery surrounding First Lady Michelle Obama’s body to investigate the way in which this form of power may serve to reify strict constraints on women and their exercise of power.

CHAPTER 4 VISUALITY AND THE PATHETIC FIRST LADY

In 2010 Mary E. Stuckey argued for a “rethinking” of the concept of the rhetorical presidency, originally developed by Jeffrey Tulis in 1987, because “this model assumes a white male president who governs within a pre-cable, pre-internet, political context”

(2010, p. 38). Stuckey's call is grounded in two primary observations of growing lacunae in our understanding of the rhetorical aspects of political discourse. First, her recognition of the faulty presumption of a white male president, suggests that our current rhetorical theory lacks an ability to account for the changing level of diversity, in both race and gender, in political representation. Stuckey explains this is not to say that race has not been considered within annals of rhetorical presidency literature, "There are at least two ways to treat race and the presidency- policy and the presidential body, and while we have done significant work in one area, there is little in the other," (p. 43).

In addition to race, Stuckey points out that our current understanding of the role of the rhetorical presidency. "The presidency is an important site where our national expectations of gender are performed and ritualized, but there are few studies that examine this in any detail," (p. 44). Subsequently, Stuckey argues we should expand this form of analysis to female political actors like the first lady in a manner that surpasses the influence of 'pillow talk.' "We know that political processes and institutions can be gendered in important ways...just as we know that all presidents have been men, and that this necessarily had an effect on the office. Yet when women and the executive branch get studied, more often than not, it is because of the role of First Lady. There have been some steps made in the direction of studying how women exercise executive power in their own right (Martin & Borelli, 2000" (p. 44).

Second, Stuckey alludes to the influential manner in which cable and internet are changing the way the public experiences our political leaders. This change is driven by the visuality inherent to a 24-hour news cycle and the availability of the Internet,

technologies that have a profound effect on the manner through which the first black president is interpreted. She suggests, “Students of visual rhetoric may be able to discern whether the depictions of this president differ from those of previous presidents, and if so, to what those differences may be attributed, and how might they be best understood,” (p. 43). The lack of filter could allow for constituents to construct their own interpretations with less influence from the filtering mechanism of media.

In order to better understand these lacunae in our understanding of the theory of the rhetorical presidency, and offer potential remedies that heed Stuckey’s call, I focus on charting a rhetorical path toward this realization in this chapter. Of primary concern in this chapter is substantiating the claim that the visual influence of a first lady lies in her enthymematic potential to visually operate as a site for cultural negotiation through pathetic rhetoric. Further concerns include potential ramifications of the pathetic realm on the potential of the Office of the First Lady as a site for cultural negotiation as well as the rhetorical power of the office as a whole.

The Political Body

Stuckey suggested that “There are too few studies of the embodied presidency and there are productive possibilities in melding the study of the rhetorical presidency with other areas in the field” (p. 49). To examine this idea, an idea rooted in a need for understanding the way the body and all of its cultural meanings are influential in presidential rhetoric, it is most conducive to look to McKerrow’s 1998 examination of corporeality and cultural rhetoric. McKerrow begins by posing a question, “If rhetoric is to re-fashion itself in responding to a culturally diverse world, what kind of theoretical

orientation might it find as its ‘site’ from which to appraise it?” (p. 315). His first step in answering this question is to remind us about the powers that have dominated, and so constructed, western rhetoric. “Rhetoric is an expression of power, and power has been in male hands for most of western history...Not only has Western Rhetoric denied women a place, it also has, in privileging specific ‘sides’ of dichotomous binaries, severely limited its applicability in a multi-cultural world” (p. 315). As previously examined in earlier chapters, it is the process of binary thinking that has positioned concepts like pathos and logos, rationality and emotion, and consequently men and women in opposition to each other. McKerrow offers this comparison to articulate these oppositions:

Women/body/emotion/nature/private sphere
Men/mind/reason/culture/public sphere (p.317)

Clearly this division is problematic in numerous ways, but for the purpose of this examination I focus on the way in which this cultural understanding limits a woman’s potential to have agency in the public sphere, by providing a disciplining mechanism for any woman that attempts to exert her voice in that sphere and on the ways that this removes pathetic discourse from what’s understood as legitimate political rhetoric. In order to traverse this troubling binary, McKerrow suggests that we must abandon this manner of thinking through seeking an orientation that supersedes these oppressive categories through a rhetoric situated in the embodied or corporeal aspects of political presentation.

An important step in this pilgrimage is to examine how this binary operates with respect to the presentation of body in our public and political spheres:

As men participate in the public sphere, those in positions of power need concern themselves less with bodily appearance than with the mind's ability to give expression to ideas...[that] has not been the fate of women in the public sphere, further underscoring the mind/body split as women give expression to ideas in orientation, an accessible public settings." (p. 317).

When considering the rhetorical presidency, traditionally conceptualized in a white male and evident way to diversify our rhetorical lens is to examine alternative members that are active in the rhetorical presidency, namely the Office of the First Lady (OFL). McKerrow argues, that it is through examination such as this that, "we come to terms with rhetoric in places not currently included within the province of administrative rhetoric. We also need to go beyond the province of women's discourse to extend this reversion to include people of color" (p. 317). In fact, the parallel is made clear through an understanding of how the restriction of women and people of color operates through the restriction on emotion because the association between these groups and the characterization of emotionality was the rationale for excluding them from the public sphere. In historical terms, this is what led to these groups being labeled as the 'weaker' in that they were asserted to lack the capacity for mental discipline. Women being physically weaker served as a distraction and bonus, as this same accusation was not waged against other sectors of minorities. Through the use of Michelle Obama, the first African American to ascend to the Office of the First Lady, this chapter is able to explore the potential of pathos.

First Lady Michelle Obama, the first black first lady, offers a unique opportunity to inspect the intersection of race and gender through the presentation of body. In her tenure she has advocated several campaigns, but most notably she officially launched her

first campaign as a first lady in 2010, “Let’s Move!” anti-obesity campaign with a speech in which she set a goal of eliminating childhood obesity within a generation. Michelle Obama’s presentation helps reveal a link between pathetic politics and the way she used her body to underscore her proposed cultural and political changes.

Obama’s body first earned attention in the media in 2009 when she chose to wear a sleeveless dress, an outfit that highlighted her well sculpted upper arms in her official White House portrait:

The Washington Post reports that it has received hundreds of reader complaints on the subject. A Chicago Tribune reader wrote of her outfit during the president’s congressional address, “Does the lady not understand that these Big Speech Events are serious and important? Not a cocktail party?” (Clark-Flory, 2009)

Newspaper columnist David Brooks wrote, “She’s made her point. Now she should put away Thunder and Lightning...she should not be known for her physical presence” (Farrell, 2011, p. 135). Since that initial controversy Obama’s physical body has had a consistent presence in arguments and commentary related to the First Lady’s role in the White House and more importantly to her role as a spokeswoman for her ‘anti-obesity’ campaign. I argue that Michelle Obama’s insertion of her own body as evidence for her campaign represents an emerging topos in first lady rhetoric that may have substantial impacts on our understanding of the rhetorical presidency as a whole.

Visual Rhetoric and the Body

When embarking on an examination of the body as a rhetorical construct, the role of visibility provides a means to respond to Stuckey’s 2010 call for a better understanding of the way cable and the internet have changed the way citizens interact within the

political sphere. Returning to McKerrow's articulation of the notion of 'woman' being intimately tied to the 'body' and subsequently 'emotion' (pathos), it follows that this analysis provides an avenue to investigate the pathetic power of the Office of the First Lady and her subsequent ability to utilize that form of argumentation to traverse the public and private spheres for political gain.

The study of visual rhetoric is a particularly fruitful place to begin this pursuit. When considering the rhetorical potential of images in culture, it is prudent to acknowledge the argument that western cultures are historically suspicious of images. In 1973 Sontag prolifically articulated our cultural distrust of images by arguing that their power is deceptive in the emotional appeal they derive from a portrayal of 'reality.' "Both the order and the exact time for looking at each photograph are imposed; and there is a gain in visual legibility and emotional impact" (p. 5). Mitchell (2005) explains that theorists have been particularly vulnerable to falling into an iconoclastic mindset through their, "ineluctable tendency of criticism itself to pose as an iconoclastic practice, a labor of demystification and pedagogical exposure of false images," (p. 8). It is this suspicion of the emotional impact (pathos) of visuals that has fueled our cultural fear of images as an advanced form of demagoguery.

This fear of pathetic potential is not dissimilar to the fear of the pathetic potential of a woman and presentations of her body. W. J. T. Mitchell identifies the feminization of the visual in his examination of the question 'What do images want [from us]?' [a phrase that not coincidentally mirrors the popular incantation 'What do women want?'] Mitchell argues "Images are 'kinds of pictures,' classifications of pictures. Images are, then, like

species, and pictures are like organisms whose kinds are given by the species” (p. 85). Mitchell’s broad definitions and inclusion of a variety of forms of images, speaks to his wish to focus on the relationship between image and spectator and what he calls “our wish to penetrate them [images] and our fear of being swallowed up by them. (I trust that there’s no need for me to comment on the heavy quotient of what is called male fantasy in this scene)” (p. xvii). This is not to suggest that Obama is invoking the power of the male gaze by purposefully using her body to attract attention. Further, it is not to suggest that every body in the visual realm is inherently feminized, but instead it is to suggest that it is the way in which we approach the image is masculinized. His eroticization and personification of images as an attempt to argue that much of what images are is dependent on how we treat them. Do we ignore, suppress, or revile them in the manner of critics of the pathetic realm? Or do we accept the image and let it speak to its own desire?

Mitchell situates the image in a similar position to the female by arguing that the critical issue may not be the image, but the spectatorship that encounters that image. This perspective is similar to the one that Foss worked from in arguing that we should evaluate images with respect to their function, “Images thus do not determine their own interpretation but require interpretation” (Foss, 1994, p. 216). Accepting Mitchell and Foss’s interpretation positions the importance of the image as experiential, in that the image ‘calls’ to the spectator to see what they want to see and so may serve as a productive reflective lens of culture. This ‘call’ to the spectator operates in a very similar manner to the rhetorical device of the enthymeme examined in Chapter 2.

The Enthymeme and Visual Rhetoric

Within the world of argumentation studies, the use and utility of visual rhetoric has taken on greater significance in the past thirty years. Key to understanding the way in which our evolving technology is changing the format and function of public discourse is Aden's 1994 argument that the effect of this advancement has brought us into a postmodern realm of political discourse. He points to McGee's conception of discourse fragments through unarticulated frames, leaving contemporary audiences to fill in the missing information through what is 'already known' to them (McGee, 1990). "As a result, television viewers must rely on their own store of fragments to decode, interpret, and evaluate televised arguments" (Aden, p. 55). Further, "Both content and form suggest that arguments in postmodern cultures function deductively, relying upon audience agreement of what's already 'known' to create further agreement." (Aden, p. 56).

Despite widespread agreement on the importance of visual rhetoric, the role of visual rhetoric within argumentation studies is questioned primarily due to a presumption that a visual cannot argue in the same sense as verbal arguments. For example, in 1996 Fleming argued visuals lack the ability to assert a specific claim and supporting reasons. In addition, he contends that images have no negative, therefore dismissing their potential from the oppositional realm of argumentation (Fleming, 1996). However, a growing amount of scholars has referenced classical rhetoric, specifically Aristotle's *topoi* and rhetorical devices to make the claim that we have understated visual's connection to argumentation. Smith (2007) explains, "When the enthymeme is understood more broadly, visual communication can be classified as argumentation, thus enhancing the credibility of visual persuasion" (p. 114).

The pathetic power of the enthymeme and visual images lies in their ability to promote engagement and eventual action. Aristotle understood this potential when he credited the enthymeme in *The Rhetoric* as such, “Speeches that rely on examples are as persuasive as the other kind, but which rely on enthymemes excite the louder applause” (1356b, 20). That ‘excitement’ is pathos, but unlike in Sontag’s articulation, pathos is a productive rhetorical source. Smith 2007 acknowledges the wealth of recent literature that connects the enthymeme and visual rhetoric, but challenged that this is a modern or popular conception to demonstrate the need for more literature to support this understanding. Instead, arguing that Aristotle’s conception of the enthymeme allows for visuality through the portrayal of probabilities presented through an image. “To be persuasive, enthymemes must identify with the common opinions of their intended audiences. Creators of visual enthymemes discover these common opinions in context and culture, incorporating them into their messages” (Smith, 2007, p. 120). In sum, the enthymeme’s rhetorical power operates in a similar manner as visual images; they invite and construct engagement, which is a potent political power.

In order to substantiate the claim that the visual influence of a first lady lies in her enthymematic potential to visually operate as a site for cultural negotiation through pathetic rhetoric I turn to an analysis of images related to First Lady Michelle Obama. Examination of the Obama Administration’s healthcare initiative as well as the First Lady’s concurrent anti-obesity initiative provides a productive site to better understand the way the OFL can assist the president in addressing the public through the means of visual rhetoric. These initiatives are significant in that Obama’s healthcare plan focused

on signing into law a piece of legislation (logos-centric) while the First Lady focused on cultural awareness (imbued with pathos) through image events with speeches playing a supportive role. This is not to say that the President and the First Lady solely used either logo-centric or pathetic reasoning, but is instead to suggest that an analysis of their individual emphasis is a productive endeavor.

Visualizing the First Lady

Caroli argues that “the United States presidency...includes two jobs that are performed by separate individuals in other forms of representative governments: a head of state who presides over ceremonial functions and a head of government who makes major appointments and takes a decisive role in legislation” (1987, p. xviii). It is this situation that has led presidents to offer their wives as a surrogate for their approval and as a symbol for their control over their government. In effect, if the body of the president is viewed as a reflection of the American people’s expectations, then he is expected to focus on the cerebral, logos-based tasks, leaving the first lady to embody the ceremonial, pathetic realm of the political sphere.

The ceremonial function of the presidency relies on presentation, and thus visuality. However, Marton argues that this visuality is more than style, more than hairdos and White House décor and inaugural gowns and controversies over china and guest lists, instead she suggests that the role of presidential spouses is vital to a full understanding of their husbands’ administrations and the presidency itself” as the first lady serves as “a link to the real world from which his power and position isolate him” (2001, pp. 3-4). Central to understanding the interpretive role of the first lady is an

examination of the way in which the concept of the rhetorical presidency has been applied to the Office of the First Lady.

Studies on the function and role of the first lady have adopted the theory of the rhetorical president as a tool to assess the power of the first lady. Parry-Giles and Blair (2002) argue that the rhetorical rise of the first lady is a “path that at once holds a symbiotic relationship with the rhetorical presidency yet is unique in its own rhetorical path and substance.” Essentially, that the OFL has a rhetorical function in that it operates through intra-governmental interaction and the act of taking the message directly to the people. However, the office is different in substance and style. The Constitution does not allocate substantive or specific duties to the OFL, so the position has only been defined through institutional custom and cultural expectations. Most important of those customs and expectations is that messages disseminated from the OFL work to support the overall goals and purposes of the president’s administration. Stylistically, the office differs because it predominantly operates in the cultural sphere of public discourse. First Ladies are routinely sent out to commemorations, memorials, dedications, and other rhetorical events that have constructed the celebrity status of the office in our culture.

In 2011 Borrelli argued that “we know much more about what first ladies have not done than about what they have consistently and routinely contributed to the presidency” (p. 2). Borrelli’s statement highlights the prolific yet fragmented nature of a scholarship that focuses on the role(s) and influence of the first ladies of the United States. Past research has primarily been retrospective in that it has illuminated the way in which first ladies have deviated from a general understanding of the cultural expectations

for their office. In many cases this has been to the detriment of working toward a greater understanding of the way in which this office has expanded and changed in modern presidencies. Historically, the first lady is understood to act as the ‘leader of the nation’s women,’ a title that supports a gendered conception of the office itself. Borrelli argues that, “integral to these public expectations and to first lady priorities, are judgments about gender, and gender role modeling (p. 3),” a fact that is highlighted by the juxtaposition of the first lady to the office of the president, an office that “gender scholars have concluded is arguably the most intensely masculine post in the United States government” (p. 2). Interestingly, Marton notes how slowly this office has reacted to changing social norms, “Ironically, while women have been breaking down the last remaining barriers toward full equality, the first lady’s political role remains circumscribed” (Marton, 2001, p. 5).

Parry-Giles explained that women in politics often encounter a “double bind” in that they are expected to portray the private sphere in the public sphere and this leads to a situation in which a “woman [may] become so powerful they lose their femininity” (2000, p. 208). Hayden (1999) argues that the female political representative negotiates this paradoxical view of femininity by employing feminine style, “as a rhetorical strategy, feminine style often reflects rhetors’ efforts to negotiate the power relations that gender entails” (1999, p. 100). Feminine style is most notably understood as “a synthesis of form and substance that works to promote an alternative political philosophy reflecting traditionally feminine values,” essentially it is a style that promotes participatory action and invokes a personal tone (Dow & Boor Tonn, 1993, p. 287). While some have celebrated the recognition of the utilization and prevalence of feminine style, others have

claimed that this sort of rhetorical compartmentalizing serves only to further marginalize women. Hayden (1997) questioned whether a form “embraced by the dominant culture can at the same time serve to challenge that culture” (1997, p. 137). Parry-Giles took this argument a step further, “while most campaign rhetorics exhibit a ‘feminine style’ they simultaneously rely upon prevailing masculine values and themes. Instead of resulting in a feminized political sphere, contemporary campaign rhetorics reflect the continual marginalization of women in the political process and the general exclusion of women from political office and political power” (1996, p. 338). Additionally, while several scholars have noted the adoption of feminine style by males to the delivery of political speech, Parry-Giles argues that feminine style has served predominantly to change the style of political speech and not the substance. With respect to the first lady, it is the gendered conception of the office that links the position to feminine style, not necessarily to women in general. The Office of the First Lady may in fact be one of the few sites left that require a feminine style.

As argued in previous chapters, large-scale suspicion of the first lady is imbued with patriarchal insecurities. More specifically, these criticisms illustrate the pervasive fear that the rationalized, masculine, logos-centered Office of the President may be defiled or contaminated by the emotional, pathos-centered nature of the Office of the First Lady. The question that follows this marginalization of the pathetic appeal in political discourse is ‘what are we missing when we examine the rhetorical presidency through only a logo-centric connection to power and influence?’

Some scholars, like Borrelli (2011) have looked past the role of the first lady as purely ornamental and instead contend that the first lady serves an important representative role in government because “rather than simply restating or explaining the president’s words to the public, the first lady takes on the much more difficult and far riskier task of interpreting one to the other” (2011, p. 211). Borelli’s position is a development of this position as she argues “he embodies the best of the public sphere; she embodies the best of the private sphere”, an argument that leads this analysis to examine the way in which the first lady may act as interpreter between the public and private spheres, through the visuality of her role (2011, p. 5).

Michelle Obama’s Body as Evidence

On March 20, 2009 Michelle Obama opened up at about her body to the New York Times, “This is work...I have hips, and I have them covered up with these pleats [skirt]” as part of an interview promoting her Let’s Move! Anti-Obesity program (Burros). Michelle Obama’s utilized her body as a rhetorical response to critics of her initiative, in that it represents a hyper-personal political style of the body as argument in the light of rapidly changing political circumstances that both she and her husband face. This critique is fueled by enthymematic rhetorical power as it is based on a comparative analysis from the audience (public) on what is ‘already known’ relative to meanings womanhood and black womanhood in the United States.

As Barack Obama ascended to the presidency in 2008 as the first black president of the United States, his physical presence and that of his family’s entering the White House, reflect changing cultural norms in our country. Collins (2012) explains the

importance of this occurrence for the nation as a whole as well as the individual African American, “African American families and First families have both been in the public eye, albeit for ostensibly different reasons, the former as a site of what not to be if one wished to achieve the American Dream, and the latter, a model of what one should try to be in order to get there” (Just Another American Story? The First Black First Family, 2012).

Key to President Obama’s platform during the campaign was a promise to institute national healthcare reform. As First Lady, Michelle Obama followed the tradition of past first ladies and launched a program that she hoped would be depoliticized. Her initiative, entitled “Let’s Move!” set out the goal of stamping out childhood obesity in a single generation. Given the large-scale partisan critique of this endeavor, it is plausible to concur that the visuality of the First Lady’s body, and its presentation as evidence served as a foundation to contest her campaign. For instance, prominent radio host Rush Limbaugh exclaimed:

Michelle, My Belle, minus the husband, took the kids out to Vail on a ski vacation, and they were spotted eating and they were feasting on ribs, ribs that were 1,575 calories per serving with 141 grams of fat per serving. She is a hypocrite. Leaders are supposed to be leaders. If we’re supposed to go out and eat nothing—if we’re supposed to eat roots, and berries and tree bark and so show us how. And if it’s supposed to make us fit, if it’s supposed to make us healthier, show us how. (Parton, 2015)

As the Washington Post explained of an Alabama high school football coach’s comments on the First Lady’s body, “[he] is neither the first nor the most high-profile person to feel moved to comment on the first lady’s physique....Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner, the Wisconsin Republican, issued an apology after he was caught commenting on her ‘large

posterior” (Thompson, 2013). These remarks reflect the reality that in the United States Michelle Obama’s body represents not just the physical ‘fitness’ of the female body, but also the political ‘fitness’ of her visibility. “Her body nevertheless may evoke historical and cultural meanings over which she cannot control” (Farrell p. 135).

Essentially, concepts of race, gender, class, and body are not inherent or intrinsic to the study of a first ladies campaign to stamp out childhood obesity, but they are important here because of the racialized response from certain sectors of the electorate to her campaign. This racialized response arises from a gendered understanding of Michelle Obama’s authority as national figurehead and takes exception to her potential role as a national black mother. Clearly, these connections are tied the use of corporeality of the First Lady’s body as evidence.

“Thus, rhetoric unbridled is womanly; rhetoric tamed is manly. In this formulation, reason is the activity of a mind in control of its body; emotion is the activity of the body only” (McKerrow, 1998, p. 317). In order to examine the rhetorical meanings surrounding First Lady Michelle Obama’s presentation of her body as evidence, I return to McKerrow’s articulation of a corporeal rhetoric, one in which he explains, “Before subject is the body” (1998, p. 318). Further he explains, “To phrase it differently, bodies are trapped inside cultures, and exhibit those acts promoted within the culture” (p. 319).

The way in which her body is critiqued and imbued with meaning, as well as used to challenge those meanings is of utmost importance to this analysis, because as McKerrow reminds us:

To consider the role of the body in ‘playing the part’ as well as the mind, and to consider the fact that body and mind must be ‘together’ in the role, does not take

much imagination. Fitting into another culture, or even within our own culture, requires a corporeal presence—an embodied sense of rhetoric as a performance that one does, rather than as an analytical, objectified extension of who one is. The prospect of fitting in raises another issue—what is our nature as human, and how is that related to the culture in which we find ourselves. (p. 322-323)

Given the historical precedence of Michelle Obama's time as first lady, Collins (2000) concept of intersectionality is instructive as it reminds us:

Analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization, which shape Black women's experiences and, in turn, are shaped by Black women (p. 299).

Essentially, Collins's admonition makes the point that a black women's experience is not necessarily every black woman's experience. The intersection between gender and race is further delineated by the added intersection of class. As the notion of class in and of itself has spurred numerous renderings of its impact in this world, for the purpose of this study I conceptualize class broadly. Scott and Leonhardt (2010) explain that:

One difficulty in talking about class is that the word means different things to different people. Class is rank, it is tribe, it is culture and taste. It is attitudes and assumptions, a source of identity, a system of exclusion. To some it is just money. It is an accident of birth that can influence the outcome of a life. Some Americans barely notice it others feel its weight in powerful ways. (p. 117)

Intersectionality, while essential as a theoretical component, is nevertheless difficult to address without a proper locus for examination that resembles these intersections. Returning to McKerrow's conceptualization of a corporeal rhetoric, Stuckey's 2010 call for an embodied understanding of the rhetorical presidency, and the overarching pursuit of pathos in our rationalized world leads this analysis to the body.

In order to attempt to account for the representation of these identities within the images I will draw from two primary texts for the analysis. The first is Susan Bordo's

Unbearable Weight in which she articulates the intersection of body, race, and feminism. The second is drawn from Amy Erdman Farrell's work *Fat Shame* that offers a focus on the physical body and the presidency to help frame the discussion of images of Michelle Obama's body. In this effort I engage images of Obama that were included in news articles and opinion editorials related to her campaign.

Michelle Obama officially launched her Let's Move campaign in February 2010 and since that time numerous images of her involvement with the campaign have been proliferated throughout the media and have contributed to her public persona. Traditional conceptions of the body in relationship to construction of citizenship place the body squarely in the private sphere. However, the Obama's emphasis on the health of the body in their respective initiatives provides an opportunity to investigate how a logo-centric and pathetic body argument may intersect at the level of values that are being negotiated. Given the publicity of the first lady and her anti-obesity initiative, analysis of her body has been elevated from a level of media abstraction to a form of evidence supporting her overall aim.

Thus far in the campaign, two dominant image types have been prevalent on the national stage: images of Obama's body moving and her body consuming. Respectively, these images represent the very paradox that the OFL represents, the act of acting privately, publicly or moving from the private to the public sphere. As a point of analysis I take on Bordo's 1993 explanation of the "quest archetype" in which they depict "the heroine's commitment, will, and spiritual integrity through the metaphors of weight loss, exercise, and tolerance of and ability to conquer physical pain and exhaustion," but are

brought into clearer focus when identities of race and body-based discrimination are included in the picture (p. 196).

The Private Body Moving in Public

The first set of images focuses on Obama's body as she enacts the very lifestyle changes she supports. Previous first ladies' campaigns have included strategic photo-ops that show the first lady posing with a representative of their respective public awareness campaigns in positions that support traditional gender roles of the first lady as decorative object (Caroli 1987; Borelli 2011). However, images of Obama encourage an interactive approach that highlights her physical form in a way that has the potential to challenge traditional conceptions of the First Lady. Central to the promotion of the campaign are images that highlight Michelle Obama as an active, healthy, slender woman and mother of color. Farrell argues that traditionally the physically fit and muscular body has been associated with racial identity to involve, "primitive behaviors, atavistic impulses, and low class position" (Farrell p. 133). However, Farrell goes on to explain that recently the slender body has come to offer a "promise to hoist a person into the realm of the 'most civilized body' and to erase the cultural meaning of other stigmatized physical characteristics" like race (Farrell p. 131). It is important to note that the slender body offers a 'promise' and not necessarily a solution to the dominance of race classifications and stereotypes. Bordo argues that there are two dominant body stereotypes commonly enacted: the first of a racialized, strong, and animalistic body that stands in contrast to more modern conceptions of the slender and physically fit body as a symbol of the "glamorized and sexualized yuppie" elite (Bordo p. 195). Images of Obama working with

her Let's Move! program reveal the tension between Bordo's two stereotypes. The images focus on Obama in slim fitting workout clothes playing sports, racing, dancing, hula hooping, and being physically active with children around the country. In contrast to previous images of the first lady feminine ideal in which the body remains in an ordered and coiffed manner, in images of Obama we see her hair tousled while running for a touchdown pass, sweat on her brow after the finish of a relay race, and even depictions of her muscles straining as she moves through the steps of a dance routine. In these images Obama depicts feminine equality as she races side by side with a man but those images are tempered by the traditional elements of nurture through a mother narrative as she is surrounded by the children she is trying to help.

Additionally, racial stereotypes are made even more problematic as the viewer encounters the strength of Obama through her body. These images allow the viewer to invoke traditional stereotypes about the muscular raced body in a way that provides a license that would not be afforded for viewers encountering the body of a white first lady. The strength of the racial stereotype can be seen as dominant in these images given the commentary surrounding Michelle Obama. This is the case because while Bordo may maintain that a muscular body can depict either primitive or yuppie stereotypes, it appears that the depiction of race with respect to First Lady Michelle Obama is dominant in the many caricatures of her comparing her likeness to animals. It is important to realize that identities of race and gender do not operate in isolation, but instead they are informed by and inform body-based discrimination and conceptions of the powerful elite body of

the first lady in order to open up the possibility of future reconstructions of stereotypes and problematic values.

The Private Body Consuming in Public

In contrast to the first set of image types in which Obama is seen expelling energy through exercise, the second set of image types depicts Obama consuming foods. Bordo notes that, “Some writers have argued that female hunger (as a code for female desire) is especially problematized during periods of disruption and change” (Bordo p. 206). Bordo’s notation is eerily prophetic when applied to Obama’s detractors in times of strong partisan divide, because as Anderson explained the first lady must, “develop a social style that [is] rhetorically responsive to the political situations they (and their husbands) face” (p. 2). Bordo looks to Douglas to take this argument further, “images of the ‘microcosm’-the physical body- may symbolically reproduce central vulnerabilities and anxieties of the ‘macrocosm’-the social body” (Bordo p. 186). Several groups have utilized images of Obama eating fast food to promote the argument that she is a hypocrite when it comes to healthy eating, most notably when Obama was criticized for eating a 1,700 calorie fast food mealⁱ. However, it is interesting to note that Obama’s detractors have not limited themselves to images of her eating unhealthy foods; in fact several images depict Obama eating foods that cannot be clearly identified. These images are problematic because they put on display the desire (hunger) of a woman, which generally calls attention to her as a black woman, and specifically as the first black First Lady. Notably, Bordo argues that the power of the body as a site for identity negotiation is in the ability of the body to contain and offer multiple interpretations (pp. 206-207). This

may be especially important in the case of the politicization of Michelle Obama's body through images related to her public awareness campaign. Those on either extreme of the political and cultural spectrum may see in these images an empowered black female that represents a coming cultural shift or possibly an indulgent exception to cultural norms that represents a deviant of the preferred system.

Conclusion

This analysis of the visual rhetorical messaging of Michelle Obama's body supports three primary implications for the study of pathos in politics and the study of the first lady. First, the visual analysis of the cultural reflections highlighted by the images of Michelle Obama's body supports the continuing argument that the Office of the First Lady remains a marginalized position through which barriers are constructed in an attempt to contain the gendered political actor. The very fact that images of a strong, female, black, woman displaying her body has caused so much discussion and criticism throughout our public sphere illustrates that these biases are still strong. However, her rhetoric has the potential to operate in these spaces by challenging their assumptions about the form and function of a first lady. She manages this by operating rhetorically in a space that presents and body rhetoric that is irreconcilable with those stereotypes. Ultimately, this strategy leads to a place where the biases are more visible as stereotypes, based on faulty assumptions and generalizations.

Second, this chapter offers analysis of a rhetor interacting with public deliberation through representations of their own body, and so it follows that this work adds to the wealth of literature that highlights the personal/private sphere focus of female political

actors. The expansion of persona to include the corporeality of the body represents a hyper-personalized rhetoric that may have substantial impacts for the rhetor as they are called on to not only account for what they think, but what they are. This is primarily due to the nature of the body, as it is perceived by the audience through mediated images. Finally, the way in which visuals of the body can stand in for the unsaid premise of the political discourse surrounding the Obama Administration speaks volumes to the enthymematic value fueling these controversies. Essentially, critique and discussion centering on Michelle's body as being deviant, different, not fit to serve as an example for Americans, can be viewed in the following enthymematic structure:

Premise: Michelle Obama's body is deviant from cultural images of first ladies.

Hidden Premise: First ladies bodies should resemble past (white) first ladies.

Conclusion: She is not a good first lady.

Visuals and images are rhetorically useful in that they can act "as a mediating element "in the social and political relations amongst citizens" (Azoulay p. 39). Essentially visuals have the power to begin a civic conversation but they also allow the viewer access to a variety of social stereotypes that they may bring to the image. However, the nature of images also further corroborates how the body is a valuable site for the negotiation of multiple types of identity and through the images of Obama may represent that our culture is going through a period of intense social change. Researchers must remain adept to these rapid social upheavals and so train their analyses to look beyond traditional conceptions in order to account for social and cultural change.

Finally, this analysis counters the body of literature that has largely dismissed the influence of the Office of the First Lady as purely ornamental and without substance. As

scholars investigating the rhetorical nature of the presidency it is not only prudent but wise to respond to Stuckey's 2010 call for "less codification and more new thinking" (2010, p. 39). I have attempted to do that by viewing the rhetorical presidency as more expansive than the individual president and instead have hoped to glean more understanding into the way that other key actors in the administration contribute to the rhetorical goals of the president. What seems common in past analyses of the OFL is the emphasis on an instrumental rhetorical approach that values logos above pathos and ethos to the detriment of a better understanding of the craft.

CHAPTER 5 PATHETIC POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

In this work I drew from Stuckey's 2010 call to shape the primary goals of this project, she argued "for a "rethinking" of the concept of the rhetorical presidency because "this model assumes a white male president who governs within a pre-cable, pre-internet, political context" (p. 38). The theory of the rhetorical presidency has a long and venerable history within rhetorical studies. However, it is precisely because of the

longevity and appreciation for this theory that affords my analysis utility. Stuckey explains, “Yet, when a history becomes well-known and standard, it can also become stale, and can serve more to codify than advance a field of study,” (2010, pp. 38-39). In order to begin this work I started with a spotlight on the growing importance of images and image making in our society. This importance is seen in the impact of images on discourses involved in the societal negotiation of meaning related to citizenship, gender, and the body.

In order to analyze these rhetorical constructions I identified the Office of the First Lady (OFL) as a productive site to investigate the potential power of a presidential administration to have impact on these discourses. What was quickly apparent in that analysis is that although a first lady is not afforded direct power through designations from the Constitution; the office does have the potential to access power through alternative means. In the case of a first lady, she is constantly positioned as a complimentary opposite of the president. Were she to be too masculine, assertive, or lack a feminine requirement in any way she is criticized for encroaching on the president’s territory. Therefore, it follows that if the presidency is considered a masculine post and so is expected to act through the “hard power” of logos-centric policy making. This assertion positions the OFL to take up the complimentary opposite in pathos. However, given the denigration of pathos as a “real” or “legitimate” form of power in the rhetorical sense the OFL’s potential to access and act on this rhetorical basis has rarely been recognized as important. In an attempt to correct this error, I went back to the basics, exploring the adventures of logos and pathos throughout rhetorical history. Ultimately,

finding that a pathetic politics has the potential to afford greater understanding to discourses surrounding citizenship, gender, and the body.

In Chapter Two I wanted to identify potential avenues of access to the realm of pathetic politics. I began with Aristotle's original conceptualization of rhetorical proofs as logos, pathos, and ethos. Reexamining Aristotle's writing found that a limited interpretation of Aristotle's conceptualization of pathos is in part to blame for the denigration of pathos over the subsequent two thousand years. Key to articulating an alternative reading of Aristotle was questioning an interpretation of his designation of the rhetorical device, the enthymeme, as strictly under the purview of logos. In the remaining matters of the chapter I argued that the enthymeme might be a key to identifying ways that a rhetor may access the pathetic realm of political rhetoric. In addition, this potential revelation suggested that because of the parallels between the denigration of pathos and women and minorities, a greater recognition for pathos could continue expanding the rhetorical recognition and opportunities for these sectors of society.

In Chapter Three I sought to chart the source of the rhetorical power fueling pathetic politics. This mission took me back in time to the height of monarchical politics with Hariman's articulation of "political style." In his work Hariman argues that the courtly style of political power was situated in the proximity to the body of the sovereign or king. While he suggests that the power related to courtly style of politics lived on past the fall of monarchies, he doesn't offer any thoughts on what happens to the power rooted in the proximity to the king. Bringing Foucault into conversation with Hariman provided insight into that matter. By drawing from Foucault's theory of bio-power, a power that is

said to gain prominence at the fall of the monarchies revealed that power did not disappear but instead may lay in wait until accessed by political actors in modern forms of democratic governance. More specifically, this analysis supports the primary thesis that the proximal power derived from ‘around’ the body of the sovereign transitions through the influence of bio-power to rhetorical power positioned ‘in’ the body of members of the populace. In terms of the OFL this transition is seen through her leveraging her proximal power to the body of the president in a manner that builds pathetic rhetorical power in her own body. Further, it supports the idea that the OFL is uniquely situated to access this pathetic realm of politics through a body rhetoric that capitalizes on the visual nature of her office.

In Chapter Four, I drew on prominent images of Michelle Obama to explore her exercise of a body rhetoric in support of her anti-obesity initiative as well as the overall goals of her husband’s administration. In this effort I drew from McKerrow’s 1998 concept of corporeal rhetoric as well as various theories from visual rhetoric to illuminate Obama’s style of body rhetoric. Connections were made between the pathetic enthymeme and the power of images producing the contention that the visual influence of a first lady lies in her enthymematic potential to visually operate as a site for cultural negotiation related to discourses surrounding citizenship, gender, and the body.

A primary conclusion in this chapter is that visual analysis of cultural reflections and stereotypes initiated by interaction with images of Michelle Obama’s body supports the continuing argument that the OFL remains a marginalized office through which barriers are constructed in an attempt to contain the gendered political actor. Further,

Chapter 3 and 4 work to diagram the process through which Michelle Obama's rhetoric opens up her own body for refutation based on elements of social control rooted in biopower. In turn, this rhetorical act is also a precursor to the engagement of savage rhetoric, characterized by a vitriolic tone and rampant personal attacks, that is engaged primarily because of the body is not thought of as a traditional mode of rhetoric.

Finally, the culmination of the work to this point serves to counter the body of literature that has largely dismissed the influence of the Office of the First Lady as purely ornamental and without significant rhetorical power. In some ways the central thesis of this work is not revolutionary, in that I make no claim to have discovered a resurgence of pathetic argumentation surrounding the rhetorical presidency, but instead I contend that pathos has always been and will continue to have an important role in political decision-making. In addition, it is a misreading of this work to believe that my arguments support the conclusion that logos is no longer important. Instead, this work joins the growing chorus of voices that want to collapse the binary between logos and pathos.

The Episteme of Pathetic Politics

There is an ever-present irony in United States democratic politics that exists because of our modernist insistence that democracy will persevere through the promise of logos. This idea is fueled by an idealistic homage to the power of logos; the hope that democracy will thrive because the majority will always be able to identify the better logos-based argument. This assertion has limited our practical and academic

understanding of the intricacy of political decision-making by obfuscating the rhetorical power of pathos in our public discourse.

The irony of attempting to banish pathos from democracy is readily available in the very words we use to justify the pursuit of democratic governance. In the founding documents of American democracy, like the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, it is purported that democratic rule is a vehicle to achieve ideals of liberty, freedom, and the pursuit of happiness. Given how broadly these terms are defined, their epistemological function is largely pathetic. We know these concepts by how we feel them, many times we ‘feel them’ in our gut, an allusion to the perception of authenticity connected to bodies.

Further, considering the expectations of citizens in a democracy reveals the need for lively citizen engagement in order for the system to thrive. By definition a citizen lacking pathos is an apathetic citizen, the very antithesis of civic engagement, which is an essential component to democratic success. Tracing the trajectory of this line of argumentation, it follows that pathos is an integral part of any democratic structure. The overarching lesson is that we can no longer ignore the influence of emotion in our democracy and hope it goes away. Democracy cannot survive on logos alone primarily because the work of citizenship requires pathos. This work is largely pathetic in nature due to the strong rhetorical impact of imagery as well as the epistemic function of pathos in that when it comes to engaging in an imagined collective often we know because we feel. In this concluding chapter I want to take a look at how a pathetic political lens reveals how embodiment might get translated into a speech in a traditional text.

First Lady Michelle as Political Surrogate

In the 2016 presidential election First Lady Michelle Obama was repeatedly tapped to act as a surrogate for presidential contender Hillary Clinton. I draw from two primary texts to show how she relies on the translation of embodiment and her speech at the 2016 Democratic National Convention and her remarks on a scandal related to the presidential campaign of Donald Trump. Taken together, I argue that her remarks in these speeches can be seen as a culmination of her brand of pathetic politics, a politics that emphasizes the epistemic function of pathetic rhetoric related to visuals and the body.

During the 2016 Democratic National Convention First Lady Michelle Obama took on a prominent role as surrogate for the democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. Throughout her role as a surrogate for Hillary Clinton, headlines in the media praised Obama's rhetoric as consequential, at times even more so than the President's rhetorical surrogacy. The *New York Times* opinion columnist Frank Bruni praised what he described as, "The authentic power of Michelle Obama" (Bruni, 2016). The Guardian declared, "She found her voice" describing the DNC address as a "thunderbolt convention address [that] has been applauded as authentic, uncompromising and political" (Graves & Smith, 2016).

Michelle Obama's rhetoric is notable not only for its historical precedence, a speech given by a sitting First Lady in support of a former first lady and first female presidential candidate to earn the nomination from a major party, but also for the widespread celebration of its rhetorical appeal labeled among many political pundits as authentic. The term authenticity is constantly volleyed around the political and rhetorical

realms, however it is often done so in a nebulous manner. For a political rhetor, it is an aspiration and an honor to achieve. In the terminology of rhetorical studies it is usually conceived of as either synonymous with or an element of a speaker's ethos. For Michelle Obama and the political discourse that surrounds her, this label can be understood as an actualization of her rhetorical potential, an actualization that relies on an emphasis of the visual in her narratives.

In her speech at the DNC the first lady made several claims connecting her support of Clinton with concern over the future of the nation's youth. Utilizing the established pathetic lens reveals how Obama's rhetoric relies on two primary elements. First, the image as articulated through the act of looking or witnessing the ascendancy to the White House. Second, Obama focuses her image narrative in a critical manner that challenges the audience to interact with what they are looking at:

That is the story of this country, the story that has brought me to this stage tonight, the story of generations of people who felt the lash of bondage, the shame of servitude, the sting of segregation, but who kept on striving and hoping and doing what needed to be done so that today, I wake up every morning in a house that was built by slaves--(applause)-- and I watch my daughters -- two beautiful, intelligent, black young women – playing with their dogs on the White House lawn. (Obama, Transcript: Michelle Obama's DNC speech, 2016)

In this passage Natalie's three terms are on display through the visual narrative of Michelle waking up in the White House. The analogy relies heavily on location, in that it invites the audience into her everyday life. As she describes the most mundane of life, she chronicles not only the wonder of waking up in the White House, but the importance of who she is waking up in the White House, a black woman and a descendent of slaves. This argument is built on the act of seeing and the need for critical reflection of what is

being seen. Her paralleling her two young daughters with a narrative of slavery has the power to invoke emotions across a broad range. Guilt or shame may be invoked through the visual laden terminology such as “lash of bondage...sting of servitude,” both allusions centered on acts upon the body. However, through the insertion of her daughters playing on the White House lawn a salve is offered for the emotional tumult suggested by the previous passage. Basically it can be read as ‘look how far we have come.’

Summarily, this passage emphasizes the power of the rhetorical visual and frames their presence in the White House as a national accomplishment and foundation for a call to communal agency. Chronologically, her presence in the White House is situated within the narrative of those that “felt the lash of bondage...[but] kept on striving and hoping and doing.” What is key to Obama’s embodied narrative is that not only does she place herself in the White House through visibility and the body, but she offers the people a place as well, as witness to history with agency over the future of this country.

On October 13, 2016 Michelle Obama delivered a campaign speech at Southern New Hampshire University in her functional capacity of surrogate for Hillary Clinton. However, the form of Obama’s speech extended beyond barnstorming tactics to motivate constituents. Instead, Obama utilized this occasion to directly respond to recent allegations of sexual harassment waged against Hillary’s opponent, Donald Trump. Obama’s words in New Hampshire provide a lucid text through which we can investigate the intersection of rationality and pathos.

Rhetorical investigation of Michelle Obama’s speech reveals that this nexus occurs at the negotiation of communal values. The accusations against Trump primarily

center on the release of a recording revealing Trump commenting on a woman's body and recalling times that he has grabbed women without explicit consent (Transcripts: What the mic caught Donald Trump saying in 2005 and what he said in his apology, 2016). Obama begins by explaining that she is compelled to speak to this issue instead of her usual campaign stump speech:

So I'm going to get a little serious here, because I think we can all agree that this has been a rough week in an already rough election. This week has been particularly interesting for me personally because it has been a week of profound contrast (Obama, Remarks by the First Lady at Hillary for America Campaign Event in Manchester, Nh, 2016).

Obama then goes on to parallel the experience of hearing Trump's words in the same week of celebrating the International Day of the Girl and her initiative Let Girls Learn. Essentially, she justifies her rhetorical choice to speak directly to the accusations against Trump through the emotions evoked by experiencing the event. By this choice of political positioning Obama situates herself as a witness to the political spectacle, similar to that of a private citizen, rather than a member of the political elite.

From this, Obama recounts her message to those girls, a message that is revealed as the thesis of her speech in New Hampshire. "And I told them that they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, and I told them that they should disregard anyone who demeans or devalues them, and that they should make their voices heard in the world," (Obama, Remarks by the First Lady at Hillary for America Campaign Event in Manchester, Nh, 2016). The potential for Obama to assist in the negotiation of American values is illuminated in this passage. This potential is pathetic in nature and supported by three primary rhetorical techniques: her rhetoric is experiential, the nature of "truth" is

intimately tied to the physical body, and her rhetoric involves the direct invocation of emotions. Taken together these three rhetorical moves work together to form an epistemological form of ‘knowing’ that operates as justification for political action.

First, Obama’s rhetoric is experiential in nature. She has positioned herself primarily not as a woman married to the President of the United States, but instead as a citizen witnessing political events in concert with the American people:

And now, here I am, out on the campaign trail in an election where we have consistently been hearing hurtful, hateful language about women—language that has been painful for so many of us, not just as women, but as parents trying to protect our children and raise them to be caring, respectful adults, and as citizens who think that our nation’s leaders should meet basic standards of human decency. (Obama, Remarks by the First Lady at Hillary for America Campaign Event in Manchester, Nh, 2016)

In this passage Obama’s positioning of herself as a citizen is buoyed by her allusion to her role as a mother and her call to a set of values that she labels “basic standards of human decency.” This allows for the construction of an invitation to the audience to transcend past politics to more immortal truths or values. She further supports her argument by mirroring the incredulity that some felt in witnessing the 2016 presidential campaign and by utilizing the unifying term of ‘we.’ “And last week, we saw this candidate actually bragging about sexually assaulting women. And I can’t believe I am saying that a candidate for the President of the United States has bragged about sexually assaulting women,” (Obama, Remarks by the First Lady at Hillary for America Campaign Event in Manchester, Nh, 2016).

Second, Obama suggests a way of knowing that is intimately tied to the physical body. Obama justifies her decision to speak in this manner and about this topic with a

reference to her physiological reaction to the accusations; “It has shaken me to my core in a way that I couldn’t have predicted,” (Obama, Remarks by the First Lady at Hillary for America Campaign Event in Manchester, Nh, 2016). However, it is the following passage where she combines the experiential with the physical that is particularly revealing of her rhetoric strategy:

It’s frightening. And the truth is, it hurts. It hurts. It’s like that sick, sinking feeling you get when you’re walking down the street minding your own business and some guy yells out vulgar words about your body. Or when you see that guy at work that stands just a little too close, stares a little too long, and makes you feel uncomfortable in your own skin. (Obama, Remarks by the First Lady at Hillary for America Campaign Event in Manchester, Nh, 2016)

Through this passage Obama identifies the affront by Trump’s words as a wound waged against women. The importance of this metaphor, word as wound, is that it highlights the visual through the damage done to the body. Essentially, women may know it is wrong because they can feel it is wrong. The connection of epistemology or mind and body is cemented through the visceral feeling of violation. She goes on, “We’re trying to keep our heads above water,” a line that calls forth ideas of survival and loss of voice. Further she connects this wound to future generations by questioning, “If all this is painful to us as grown women, what do you think this is doing to our children?” (Obama, Remarks by the First Lady at Hillary for America Campaign Event in Manchester, Nh, 2016).

Obama’s use of experiential and physical knowledge culminates with direct invocation of emotions through primarily pathetic appeals. She characterizes Trump’s words as “hateful and hurtful” and as “shameful comments about our bodies” (Obama, Remarks by the First Lady at Hillary for America Campaign Event in Manchester, Nh, 2016). Trump’s words are likened to a violation when she argues, “It’s that feeling of

terror and violation that too many women have felt when someone has grabbed them, or forced himself on them and they've said no but he didn't listen" (Obama, Remarks by the First Lady at Hillary for America Campaign Event in Manchester, Nh, 2016).

In sum, Obama's argument is one of transcendent values, values that extend beyond politics. She supports her argument through evidence that relies on a pathetic frame of epistemological knowledge through her emphasis on experience, the body, and emotions. This framing of words as physical wounds connects the mind and body and positions Hillary Clinton as the candidate with the potential to heal those physical affronts.

We need someone who will heal the wounds that divide us...The fact that Hillary embodies so many of the values...In our hearts, we all know that if we let Hillary's opponent win this election, then we are sending a clear message to our kids that everything they're seeing and hearing is perfectly okay." (Obama, Remarks by the First Lady at Hillary for America Campaign Event in Manchester, Nh, 2016)

Use of the pathetic political lens reveals what our insistence on a preference for logocentric presidential rhetoric misses, the experiential and embodied claims that operate on the level of value. She gains access to the pathetic realm through the use of her body as an enthymematic source of political claims. In Chapter 3 I draw from Hariman to show how a woman's power is unique from men's in that her power must first be dispersed before it can be reconstituted as a whole. As a woman acting on a very public stage next to the most powerful position in the country, Michelle Obama's power was likely to be dispersed through interrogation of her body. Obama chose to engage in this process and was able to reconstitute her rhetorical power by leveraging her proximity to the president to gain visibility for her claims in the eyes of the populace.

Analysis of Michelle Obama's rhetoric as a surrogate for Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign shows the epistemic function of pathos in action, she justifies the audience knowing because they feel. This invocation of emotions is driven by her use of embodiment and is a rhetorical tactic that promotes the work of citizenship and the idea that democracy cannot survive on logos alone.

Implications for the Office of the First Lady

This investigation serves to counter the body of literature that has largely dismissed the influence of the Office of the First Lady as purely ornamental and thus without substance. Through a closer examination this critique is based in large part on a modernist fear and denigration of pathetic rhetoric. Essentially, the critique states that because the OFL is not expected to have influence on policy (logos), then she lacks political power. As the concept of the rhetorical presidency explains, the primary power of any presidential explanation is rhetorical in nature. By excavating Aristotle's explanation of rhetorical proofs and the subsequent conclusion that he did not offer that categorization as a hierarchy, reveals the fallacy of this criticism for the OFL. Accepting the idea that the pathetic realm interacts with the logos-centric realm in all forms of persuasion, requires the acceptance that the pathetic is neither purely ornamental or without substance.

Second, this work supports the identification of a hyper-personalized form of rhetoric born from the intersection of visual and the body in the form of embodiment. For Michelle Obama, this type of rhetoric is particularly useful in her representational role. Borelli (2011) offered the thesis that a primary function of the OFL is representational

between a president and the people. The presidential role relies heavily on logos to suggest prescriptions for the nation and a first lady has the opportunity to embody or perform those logos-centric ideas to the American people.

Finally, despite the productive power of this type of OFL rhetoric, visual analysis of the cultural reflections highlighted by the images of Michelle Obama's body supports the continuing argument that the Office of the First Lady remains a marginalized position through which barriers are constructed in an attempt to contain the gendered political actor.

Beyond the Office of the First Lady

Although this work has focused on the Office of the First Lady's pathetic potential, the larger implications from this analysis extend well beyond that office. Going beyond the Office of the First Lady requires a collapse of the binary between pathos and logos. It should be said that this implication joins a broad body of critical work that seeks to break binaries throughout societies in order to offer voice and emancipatory potential to minorities. In Chapter 2 this work began by drawing from Fortenbaugh's historical and rhetorical excavation of Aristotle's time in the Academy of Plato. He argues that during this time pathos was not seen as irrational because a rationality of emotion was accepted in the process of decision-making. In modern times we may call this a form of emotional decision-making, but it stems from this classical idea that emotion can be related to rationality. This idea has the potential to reorganize our understanding of the relationship between pathos and logos, eventually collapsing the binary.

The above thesis can and should be applied to theories related to political decision-making. Recognition of the potential of embodied rhetoric to assist in this endeavor highlights the idea that the way we talk about and produce meanings related to American bodies informs our politics, and vice versa. Key to this consideration is the need to reintegrate the utilization of pathos into rationalized perspectives of political decision-making. Clearly, within this idea are implications for argumentation theory as a whole. Of primary concern is the possibility for advancement on how we understand the body as refutation. By identifying the visual rhetoric as a unique type of embodied argument I suggest that the various ways that Obama does this is different from previous articulations of this rhetorical strategy of enactment⁵. The functional difference is that Obama's body rhetoric involves her using her body to visually refute the claim that the body doesn't matter. Therefore serving as further grounds to collapse the binary between mind and body, in that it's emotional and physical not rational and mental.

This is not to suggest that this work is the first to recognize that pathos has always existed in our political discourse. However, it does argue for an end to the binary debates that attempt to label pathos as good or bad for political discourse and instead to recognize that what is missing is an understanding and to some extent, an appreciation of, the pathetic realm of these issues.

As for the political realm, this work offers insight into alternative means of proof, action, and motivation with respect to political decision-making. In the introduction to this work I noted that the 2006 election revealed a phenomenon that many media and

⁵ See Dow & Boor Tonn's 1993 work on feminine style and political judgment

political analysts are calling a “post truth” or “fake news” phenomenon. Namely, that Trump’s victory revealed there are grounds to say we are learning from the outset of his administration that there are a lot of people who don’t care about rational, logical, argument. Expansion of the ideas brought forth in this work may assist in understanding the politics of the era in that absolute dissent can be articulated as an active and preferable form of citizenship for some citizens.

Finally, this work joins feminist theorists criticism of Habermas’s concept of the public sphere as exclusionary and never really existing at all. Habermas’s mischaracterization is in part due to a lack of understanding on pathos’ role. Pathos has always been important. Even in the time period that Habermas uses to explain his ideal of the public sphere he ignores readily available evidence of pathos’s impact. Habermas’s purely logos centric account of this time period is an ad hoc rationalization at best. At worst, it is complicit in further marginalization of minority voices.

Pathos must be developed so that theories like Habermas’s can be refined and extended in a way that is more indicative of democratic processing. Developing pathos will compliment the already existing development of logos, which provides a way for rhetorical theorists to better understand things like affective citizenship and embodiment. Theories related to the public sphere will only become more relevant as it is reconceptualized as being more about emotion, embodiment, and pathos than previously suggested.

Limitations and Future Research

A primary limitation to this research is found in the nature of the Office of the First Lady. Essentially, each first lady takes on the role of first lady to the degree that they choose based on their personality and preferences. In this work I have noted that I am not seeking longitudinal affirmation of this form of first lady rhetoric. However, I do see it as a fruitful pursuit for future research to investigate past and future first ladies to ascertain the degree to which they engage in pathetic politics. Anomalies and differing degrees of engagement are to be expected, but this line of research still has the potential to enrich our knowledge of pathetic politics as a whole.

Second, this work draws from a context where the Offices of the President and First Lady remain highly gendered by the male/female dichotomy. As social contexts change, future reassessment will be important to gauge how an evolution of this situation may impact the availability of pathetic politics to different political actors. This evolution may come in the form of a female president being elected to hold office. In this case questions naturally arise as to what happens to the Office of the First Lady. Will the office be degendered, abolished, or allowed greater access to the logos-centric realm of political life? Of no small consequence to this change will be the name that a husband of a female president may take. Will we have our First Dude, First Gentleman, or will that political actor not be subject to expectations that he take on a role expressly connected to his marriage to a woman? Although Hillary Clinton did not prevail at her bid for the White House in 2016, the time is surely coming and with it great impact on the way gender and power discourses are treated in this country.

Third, emotion has had a prominent emphasis in studies of affect that seek to understand how emotion may act as a motivating source for protest in democracy. This study inverted that line of scholarship to see how emotion is drawn from the center, through primary and powerful actors, in the effort of shaping national identity. I believe that future research where this frame of pathetic politics is applied to political actors at the margins of society is fruitful in that it will help further shape our knowledge of this concept.

A primary site for future research related to this work is within the realm of affect and affective citizenship. Within the field of affect, future work may consider the potential for collapsing the binary as useful for the development of the concept of affect as a whole. Within the work on affective citizenship, where citizens participate in part on what we recognize as value laden identity politics there is much work to be done. Post the 2016 election there are vocal calls for the Democratic Party to abandon a platform laden with identity politics. A prominent opinion editorial in *The New York Times* argued, “It is at the level of electoral politics that identity liberalism has failed most spectacularly, as we have seen. National politics in healthy periods is not about ‘difference.’ It is about commonality,” (Lilla, 2016). This debate is one that often reemerges in democratic defeat and will most likely not be settled in the immediate aftermath of Trump’s election, but it is an important reminder that politics and emotion have always been and will always remain inextricably linked to emotion.

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ABSTRACT**PATHETIC POLITICS: AN ANALYSIS OF EMOTION AND EMBODIMENT IN
FIRST LADY RHETORIC**

by

STEPHANIE L. WIDEMAN**May 2017****Advisor:** Dr. James L. Cherney**Major:** Communication**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

This dissertation explores the theoretical and practical relationship between our understandings of emotion's role in political decision-making. In this pursuit I seek a resurrection for pathos's legitimacy in rhetorical studies through the pursuit of the pathetic political realm. This work has three primary concerns: how may pathetic power be accessed, from where does this power originate, and how might political actors enact this power for their own political goals. I draw primarily from theories related to visual rhetoric and the body in order to provide perspective on how the body is politicized through the pathetic realm. As a site for analysis I look to Michelle Obama's time in the Office of the First Lady. Theoretical perspectives are drawn from a range of scholars including Aristotle, Robert Hariman, and Susan Bordo to extricate the positioning of the body within American politics.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Stephanie L. Wideman currently resides in Oswego, New York and is a Visiting Assistant Professor at SUNY Oswego. She was raised in a military family and so has lived throughout the United States eastern seaboard as well as abroad in the United Kingdom. She attended the University of West Florida in Pensacola, Florida and earned a B.A. in Communication with a concentration in Public Relations. During her time at UWF she competed for the Forensics Speech and Debate Team. That experience led her to pursue her M.A. at UWF in Political Science with a concentration in Public Administration so she could continue working with the Forensics team as a coach. She started her doctoral studies in the fall of 2010 at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan where she worked as a graduate coach for their nationally ranked Forensics Speech and Debate Union. She will complete her doctorate in the spring of 2017 and has accepted a job as an Assistant Professor and Director of Forensics at the University of Indianapolis in Indiana to begin in the fall of 2017.
