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# Recalcitrant arguments

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RECALCITRANT ARGUMENTS:  
UNVEILING WESTERN MISCONCEPTIONS OF VEILED MUSLIM WOMEN IN  
NORTH AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST THROUGH VISUAL RHETORIC

An Abstract of a Thesis  
Submitted  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

Kiranjeet Kaur Dhillon  
University of Northern Iowa  
December 2013

## ABSTRACT

On January 26, 2011, Reuters photojournalist Amr Abdallah Dalsh took an image of a unknown veiled woman gesturing at Dalsh and his camera. Using *TinEye*, a reverse image search engine, I found that 86 circulations and 22 recirculations of the photo were primarily in the United States. US graphic artist Nick Bygon created one of the recirculations, which primarily appeared on US blogs. The photo achieved this level of circulation in the US because it is consistent with, and therefore legible within the symbolic language, of the liberal democratic order. Similar to “Migrant Mother” and “Tank Man”, the photo is evidence of a historical event that displays the lone individual who represents democratic ideals of overcoming struggle.

I make two distinct arguments: First, the woman is rendered invisible by the state and therefore the photo challenges the state’s authority through body rhetoric, Manichean symbolism, and <“V” for Victory> because the photo represents veiled Muslim women as agents and challenges assumptions that women of the East are helpless, the veil or hijab is oppressive, and that Western influence is needed in West Asia and North Africa to prevent oppression of Muslim women. Ultimately, the photographic strategies of body rhetoric, Manichean symbolism, and <“V” for Victory> re-entrench the Western liberal democratic lens while also challenging it. Therefore, the photo functions as a space for critical analysis because it challenges Western representations and assumptions of veiled Muslim women through the photographic strategies.

Second, I critique Western looking patterns and argue that spectators should abandon their liberal democratic lens to embrace Azoulay’s theory of photography as a

civil contract. In order to embrace the civil contract of photography, a spectator should accept the four obligations of the civil contract. Ultimately, instead of looking at a photo, one should watch and bear witness to the events documented in the snapshot. By watching, a spectator no longer looks through the lens of liberal democratic citizenship, but through one of a civil contract.

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This study by: Kiranjeet Kaur Dhillon

Titled: Recalcitrant Arguments: Unveiling Western Misconceptions of Veiled Muslim Women in North Africa and Middle East through Visual Rhetoric

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts in Communication Studies

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Date Dr. Michael J. Licari, Dean, Graduate College

## DEDICATION

Vincent J. Binder (1980-2010)

In an episode of the *West Wing* Aaron Sorkin writes, “The streets of heaven are too crowded with angels. But every time we think we’ve measured our capacity to meet a challenge, we look up and we’re reminded that capacity may well be limitless” (qtd, in Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles 150).



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## CHAPTER 1

### THE 2011 EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION

Change is achieved through the actions of ordinary people acting as individual entrepreneurs, and it goes without saying that change will occur gradually while still-muscular totalitarian regimes grind slowly to a halt and ponder how to redirect their large, awkward machinery. (Hariman and Lucaites, 2007, p. 223)

For Egyptians, mobilization efforts, primarily through the use of social media, began in December 2010. After the Tunisian people began a revolution, Egyptians started planning a revolution of their own. On January 14, 2011, the Tunisian Revolution overthrew Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the Tunisian president. The ousting of Ben Ali gave people in the Arab World, particularly in Egypt, hope that change could be fostered (El-Taraboulsi 8). Given the commonalities between the people of Tunisia and the people of Egypt, such as repression by government, geographic location in the world, religion, and culture, it makes sense that Tunisia's success would mobilize the people of Egypt against a corrupt regime (El-Taraboulsi 9).

On January 18, 2011, Egyptian woman and anti-government protestor Asmaa Mahfouz posted a video blog on the social media network *Facebook* to promote the protest planned for January 25, 2011, an Egyptian holiday known as Police Day (Ahmed, par. 10; Sussman, par. 2). Looking into the camera she said to Egyptians, in particular women, "Do not be afraid" ("Meet Asmaa Mahfouz"). A few days after her initial post, the video had gone viral, with a re-post on *YouTube*. In response, Egyptians -- regardless of biological sex, religion, or socio-economic class -- took to Tahrir ("Liberation") Square to non-violently demonstrate in opposition to the regime of President Hosni Mubarak, who had maintained power through control, manipulation, and monopolization

for 30 years (Aswany viii). A number of concerns motivated Egyptians to protest, including women's rights, government corruption, unemployment, low minimum wages, inflation of food prices, police brutality, suppression of free speech, nepotism, and the rigging of Egypt's national legislative elections (El-Taraboulsi 8). The Egyptian Revolution was not exclusively contained to the capital, Tahrir Square. Mass protests erupted throughout Egypt in Cairo, Alexandria, Suez, Mahalla El-Kubra, and Tanta (Chick, par. 3). In a January 25 interview in *Christian Science Monitor*, Shaimaa Morsy Awad, a woman anti-government protestor, echoed Mahfouz's call: "All this is happening because we are not afraid. . . . Every day more people will join us. We are still weak, and there's a lot of work we have to do. But there's a revolution coming"(qtd. in Chick, par. 8).

On January 26, 2011, Reuters photojournalist Amr Abdallah Dalsh photographed an image of a unknown woman gesturing at Dalsh and his camera. On this day, protestors who ignored the ban of public gatherings clashed with riot police (Fahim and Stack, par. 1). *New York Times* reporter Karen Fahim and Liam Stack described the events "Riot police officers using batons, tear gas and rubber-coated bullets cleared busy avenues; other officers set upon fleeing protesters, beating them with bamboo staves" (par. 2). Despite this violence, Egyptians continued to gather and regroup (Fahim and Stack, par. 4-8). On February 11, 2011, Hosni Mubarak resigned from his position ("Hosni Mubarak," par. 1).

The Dalsh photograph provides an interesting snapshot of the social and political crisis leading to Mubarak's ouster. In Dalsh's photograph, a woman is centered between

two armed officers, who appear to be forming a police line with their bodies (Figure 1). The woman is not looking at the officers. Instead, her gaze is directed through the officers to those on the other side. She is wearing a hijab that drapes over her left shoulder and a necklace with a blue pendent that has close resemblance to a Turquoise stone. Her left arm is in the air as she gestures a “V,” a victory sign. In the background, men are walking in close and distant proximity. The woman appears to be in the street, given there are two cars near the men who are walking in distant proximity. Dalsh’s photo also offers a snapshot of performance of gender during the Egyptian protests.





Fig 1. *The Egypt Protests*. Amr Abdallah Dalsh, 2011. *TotallyCoolPix*. Web 15 August 2012.

I have chosen to focus on this photo for a few reasons. First, after months of searching through images, I realized that there were fewer images of women than men during the protest. Second, I was drawn to the images of women because they stood out. There was something interesting about them. I found common themes among the photos. Women's bodies were in public, their mouths were open, they displayed hand gestures of a "V," and their heads were veiled. Third, a majority of the photos displayed women

protesting with other women. When I came across the sole woman protestor, I was surprised because it appeared she was placing her body in great danger.

I find the images of protesting women to be fascinating because the typical images circulating in the West of Muslim women in the Arab World present them as oppressed (Ayotte and Husain; Azoulay; Cloud; Stabile and Kumar). The notion that a Muslim woman could exercise her own agency is a concept unfamiliar to the Western world. Given Western constructions, I find it to be important and timely to conduct research on how Muslim women, in particular the one woman in this image, exercise agency.

Dalsh's photograph is ripe for analysis because the image is not just about the relationship between the photographer and the subject, but also the subject and the spectator/audience. In this instance, I argue the relationship between the photographer and the photographed woman embedded in the photograph constructs a message to the Western world about Egyptian women and their political freedoms. Quotes from Asmaa Mahfouz and Shaimaa Morsy Awad help to demonstrate the argument that the people of Egypt, in particular women, would no longer be silenced.

Dalsh's photo is worthy of attention because it challenges Western conceptions of Egyptian women. In particular, the photo challenges assumptions that women of the East are helpless, the veil or hijab is oppressive, and that Western influence is needed in West Asia and North Africa to prevent oppression of Muslim women. Dalsh's photo also was recirculated and may be a nascent iconic image, which justifies a study of the photo to determine what the photo does.

U.S. graphic artist Nick Bygon created and posted an artistic refiguring of Dalsh's photo on a blog, re-circulating Dalsh's image (Bygon, par. 4; Figure 2). According to *TinEye*, Bygon's graphic has circulated on 15 websites. I found two additional graphics of the woman in Dalsh's photo. Figures 2-4 are evidence that recirculation of the woman is occurring, justifying a study of what the photo does. The producers of Figures of 3 and 4 are unknown.



Fig 2. *Egypt Will Rise*. Nick Bygon, 2011. *MRZINE Monthly Review*. Web 15 August 2012.



Fig 3 *Title Unknown*. Author Unknown, 2011. *Interview with Nick Bygon*. Email.

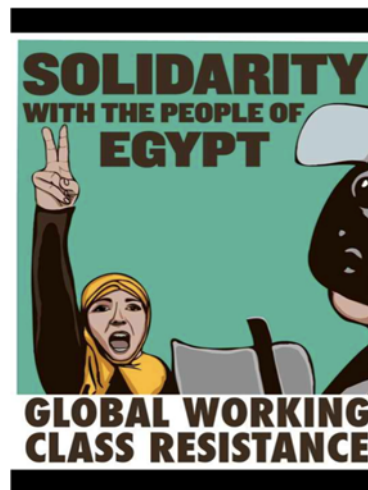


Fig 4 *Title Unknown*. Author Unknown, 2011. *Interview with Nick Bygon*. Email.

I make two distinct arguments: First, the woman is rendered invisible by the state and therefore the photo challenges the state's authority through body rhetoric, Manichean

symbolism, and <“V” for Victory> because the photo represents veiled Muslim women as agents. By using postcolonial theory, I argue, even from a perspective of looking, that the photo of a protesting Egyptian woman challenges: 1) dominant Western assumptions that veiled women are oppressed and in need of a savior and 2) assumptions that Egyptian women are not agents of political change. Through visual rhetoric, in particular the photo’s display of body rhetoric and visual ideograph of <“V” for Victory>, the photo constitutes veiled Muslim women as agents of political change against oppression and repression from Egypt and the US.

Second I argue, utilizing Azoulay’s theory of photography as a civil contract, that the liberal democratic lens through which Westerners view the photo is limited and should be abandoned (14). Instead of looking at a photo, one should watch and bear witness to the events documented in the snapshot. By watching, a spectator no longer looks through the lens of liberal democratic citizenship, but through one of a civil contract.

### Thesis Preview

In Chapter 2, I argue that rhetoric constructs, maintains, and alters social realities (DeLuca) in a social hierarchy that functions in a powerful dialectic of empowerment and constraint. In addition, I argue that visual rhetoric constitutes reality by shaping views, values, and actions of the public. Visual rhetoric is important because it has tremendous power, creates virtual experiences through presence and absence, appeals to state action, and also reveals that state action is problematic. In particular, photos are important because they play a vital role in our daily lives and establish a relationship that is

negotiated between the photographed and spectator. I draw upon communication scholars to develop a foundation for studying visual rhetoric, including: Ariella Azoulay, Anne Teresa Demo, Cara A. Finnegan, Robert Hariman. Diane S. Hope, John Louis Lucaites, and Lester C. Olson.

In Chapter 3, I argue that historically Egyptian women have played an instrumental role in mobilization efforts. This chapter is important because Egypt is the first Muslim country in Northern Africa and Western Asia to be occupied by a Western, Christian Power. Unlike other countries in Northern Africa and Western Asia, Egypt has experienced a number of nationalist movements that excite a majority of the Egyptian population, and battles over government always repeated debates about women's rights. An examination of Egypt's history will help to understand the importance of the rhetorical strategies in Dalsh's photo.

In Chapter 4, I argue imperialistic logic often codes veiled, Muslim women as being oppressed by Muslim men who the US must confront in order to be the hero or savior of the the victimized, Muslim women. Such logic is problematic because it denies women agency, essentializes veiled Muslim women as victims, masks the root causes of violence, justifies and perpetuates violence against women's bodies that have been otherized, and encourages linking humanitarian discourse with warfare in order to advance US interests. In order to protest against this dominant, imperialist logic, I argue that through veiling practices, women can protest oppression and repression of this imperialist logic.

In Chapter 5, I make two distinct arguments: First, I argue that the photo, by foregrounding a woman's body, challenges: 1) dominant assumptions that veiled women are oppressed and in need of a savior and 2) assumptions that Egyptian women are not agents of political change. Therefore, I argue that through visual rhetoric, in particular the photo, her body rhetoric, and the use of a visual ideograph of <"V" for Victory>, the woman constitutes veiled Muslim women as agents of political change against oppression and repression from Egypt and the US. The three visual strategies of a photo, body rhetoric, and use of a visual ideograph are a necessity for constituting Muslim women as political agents. Ultimately, the photographic strategies of body rhetoric, Manichean symbolism, and <"V" for Victory> re-entrench the Western liberal democratic lens while also challenging it. Therefore, the photo functions as a space for critical analysis because it challenges Western representations and assumptions of veiled Muslim women through the photographic strategies.

Second, I critique Western looking patterns and demand that spectators abandon their liberal democratic lens to embrace a civil contract of photography. In order to embrace the civil contract of photography, a spectator should accept the four obligations of the civil contract. The first obligation of the civil contract of photography is that a spectator must no longer look at a photo, but watch. Second, the spectator must be positioned as watching the photo through the lens of shared citizenship. Third, the spectator must engage in a call to action of sharing an obligation to struggle for those who are photographed. Finally, in order for the civil contract of photography to function, the spectator must shift from being the addressee to becoming the addresser. Ultimately,

instead of looking at a photo, one should watch and bear witness to the events documented in the snapshot. By watching, a spectator no longer looks through the lens of liberal democratic citizenship, but through one of a civil contract.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I summarize the findings, limitations of the study, and provide suggestions for future research.



## CHAPTER 2

### A HEURISTIC VOCABULARY

This chapter develops a heuristic vocabulary that will help to analyze the photo. This chapter is divided into two main sections, “Rhetoric” and “Visual Rhetoric.” I begin by reviewing the importance of rhetoric. Rhetoric constructs, maintains, and alters social realities that function within a social hierarchy and powerful dialectic of empowerment and constraint (Palczewski, Ice, and Fritch 5; McKerrow 100-109). In this section, I also review literature on developing good criticism, which assist me in developing my own analysis. Good criticism is original, continues the ongoing scholarly conversation, focuses on a worthy text, situates the text within a larger context, has political implications, inspires and is inspiring (Berkowitz 361; Jordan, Olson, and Goldzwig 402; Nothestine et al. 10-11; Palczewski 388-390).

In the second section I review literature on visual rhetoric, which argue visuals constitute reality by shaping views, values, and actions of the public. Visual rhetoric is important because it has tremendous power, creates virtual experiences through presence and absence, appeals to state action, and also reveals that state action is problematic (Ayotte and Husain 117; Berger; Berger, Strauss, and Stoll; Hariman and Lucaites 21-40; Mitchell; Perlmutter; Prelli 11). In particular, photos are important to study because they play a vital role in our daily lives by establishing a relationship that is negotiated between spectators and the photographed. Within this section there are two subsections, “Body Rhetoric” and “Visual Ideograph,” because the text functions in both ways, as body rhetoric and as a visual ideograph. In “Body Rhetoric” I argue that the photo displays a

body that engages visibility politics, which functions as proof of argument and/or is the argument. In “Visual Ideograph” I introduce a definition of visual ideographs and argue that visual ideographs create, reinforce, and interpret collective identity and link to ideology.

### Rhetoric

Rhetorical criticism should not be thought of as a “method.” Instead, rhetoric should be thought of as a practice that incorporates a set of principles (McKerrow). Rhetorical criticism is not made meaningful by what constitutes a method, but rather by the “conceptual heuristics or vocabularies” that “may invite a critic to interesting ways of reading a text” (Nothstine, Blair, and Copeland 40). These heuristics are typically not categorized as a method because these vocabularies do not have the same procedural rigor as a typical method. Communication scholars William Nothstine, Carole Blair, and Gary Copeland argue that conceptual vocabularies “are at their best, critically, when they are least rigorous ‘methodologically’” (40). This is because the freedom to structure a critical analysis lends a rhetor creativity to invent an argument in context of a particular text.

Rhetoric is the “use of symbolic action by human beings to share ideas, enabling them work together to make decisions about matters of common concern” that may construct, maintain, and alter social realities (Palczewski et al. 5). The study of rhetoric recognizes that we live in a world of symbol systems that reflect, select, and deflect realities (Burke 45). Rhetoric improves human life by altering realities through thought and action (Bitzer 4).

Rhetoric is more than the transmission of information. It is also about the construction of social meaning and use of terministic screens. Kenneth Burke argues that terministic screens select, reflect, and deflect reality: “Even if any given terminology is a reflection of reality, by its very nature as terminology it must be a selection of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a deflection of reality” (45). Terministic screens are a set of symbols that enable interpretation of the world through a process that reflects, selects, and deflects reality (Burke 45). For example, biological sex is a rhetorically constructed idea making people believe that all individuals are either *female* or *male*. To maintain the two-sex dualism, at birth, doctors prescribe babies as being either *female* or *male*. Professor of Gender Studies Anne Fausto-Sterling argues, “Today, children who are born ‘either/or - neither/both’ - a fairly common phenomenon - usually disappear from view because doctors ‘correct’ them right away with surgery” (31). As a result, our social reality is populated by symbols that maintain this social construction, such as having, for the most part, only two bathrooms, one for women and the other for men. However, biologically and scientifically at least five sexes exist such as female, male, herm, fern, and merm (Fausto-Sterling, par. 5). The example illustrates that realities can be constructed, maintained, and altered by our use of rhetoric. It is through our use of rhetoric that we may exclude or marginalize individuals. Only by recognizing the dominant construction of biological sex as either *female* or *male*, all those who do not “fit” into either category are excluded and are not recognized as being part of humanity (Butler 1-25).

Scholarship and citizenship can help critics foster moments of critical thought that challenge such “taken for granted” assumptions. For example, while I was attending the Gender Matters Conference in April 2012 at Governors State University in University Park, Illinois, I took notice of the symbols outside each of the bathrooms. For the first time, I saw a *gender neutral* sign outside a bathroom, which allows any individual, regardless of biological sex, to use the restroom and not feel as if one should be categorized to be *female* or *male*. This moment is one example of how critical thought can challenge social constructions of “taken for granted” assumptions.

The study of rhetoric focuses on questions of public concerns as well as who belongs to the public. Rhetoric “organizes itself around the relationship of discourse, event, objects, and practices to ideas about what it means to be “public”” (Dickinson, Blair, and Ott 2). By organizing itself around these relationships, rhetoric brings the public together to interact and engage in dialogue. The public is “often thought of as an ensemble of stranger interactions, predicated upon boundary conditions, normative standards, and/or particular instantiations between the individual and the state” (Dickinson et al. 5). In order to interact with the public, rhetoric and good criticism function to empower and constrain social hierarchy and contribute to pedagogical and theoretical understandings by assisting in the development of good criticism.

Rhetoric operates as a powerful dialectic of empowerment and constraint. Historically, rhetoric serves status and marginality meaning that once rhetoric was once only practiced by the elite. Over time, rhetoric has been critiqued by the oppressed creating space for marginalized voices to engage in public dialogue. Rhetoric should be

continuously deconstructed to understand the political implications of how we engage one another (McKerrow 100-109). Rhetoric is a public activity rather than an activity for the elite and critics should always consider the political implications of the public (Lucaites and Condit 3). In this sense, rhetoric provides us “a set of theoretical stances and critical tactics” to understand, evaluate, and intervene into day-to-day life events (Dickinson et al. 3). The use of theory improves the practice of rhetoric in contemporary society, thus improving the quality of human life. Such integration of theory and practice is called praxis.

Rhetoric, in its oldest form, has traditionally been understood as persuasive speech. However, the traditional understanding of rhetoric has “application well beyond speech” (Dickinson et al. 2). Communication scholars Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Susan Schultz Huxman identify two purposes of rhetoric. The primary purpose of rhetoric is to describe, interpret, and evaluate a text or texts. The secondary purpose of rhetoric is to contribute to pedagogical and theoretical understandings (Campbell and Huxman 8-9). Rhetoric has two purposes on a persuasive continuum with five components: (1) provides a virtual experience, (2) alters perceptions, (3) explains, (4) helps to foster change, and (5) alters/maintains action (Campbell and Huxman 8-9). First, rhetoric provides a virtual experience when one hears or sees a symbol. In association to that symbol, there is an image in one’s mind that may recreate a memory that is associated with that symbol (Campbell and Huxman 8). Second, rhetoric alters perceptions by engaging one’s virtual experience and alters that experience to create a tweaked perception (Campbell and Huxman 9). Third, rhetoric explains meaning it makes sense of

the world. Individuals need an explanation when they have an intense or irrational experience. For example an editorial reports that a group of men, attack, assault, rape, and beat a woman as she was walking in Chicago. The editorial attempts to explain and make sense of such an intense or irrational experience/event (Campbell and Huxman 8-9). Fourth, rhetoric fosters change by formulating beliefs. For example, after reading the editorial report, women begin to walk with at least one other person in Chicago, changing their belief that women can safely walk alone in a city. Fifth, rhetoric alters and maintains actions (Campbell and Huxman 8-9). The two purposes of rhetoric and the five components help my analysis because they demonstrate that text and context cannot be separated and must be evaluated and analyzed together.

Rhetorical criticism is the process of developing conceptual heuristics or vocabularies that fulfill two purposes of analyzing a text and contributing to pedagogical and theoretical understandings- In order to fulfill these two purposes, a rhetorical scholar must meet seven characteristics to be considered good rhetorical criticism. Outlining the characteristics of what good criticism is, is important to understanding what established vocabularies should do. One can establish a criticism, which is good to do but, good criticism incorporates these seven characteristics: is original, continues the ongoing scholarly conversation, is specific but general, focuses on a worthy text, situates the text within a larger context, has political implications, inspires and is inspiring (Berkowitz 361; Jordan, Olson, and Goldzwig 402; Nothestine et al. 10-11; Palczewski 388-390). Each of these components is important because criticism could fulfill just one of these

components, but good criticism incorporates all of these to contribute to the on going scholarly discussion.

Good criticism is about originality and innovatively continuing the ongoing conversation by focusing on a worthy text or texts (Berkowitz 361). In order to continue the ongoing conversation, good criticism introduces vocabulary that should be specific but general, that includes past voices as well as the new participants and invents “practical wisdom for others, wisdom that would be unlikely to emerge among rhetorically trained readers absent the essay’s argumentative angle of analysis” (Jordan, Olson, and Goldzwig 402).

The text is situated within a larger context (Palczewski 388-390). Good criticism should acknowledge that power structures influence a text and the reading of the text and that fragments of a text constitute culture and context. A text is a fragment of culture and context (McGee 286). In order to understand context and a text as a fragment of culture and society, a text may need further exploration.

Good criticism has political and moral implications that engage citizenship and scholarship. Citizenship involves an individual situating herself/himself within public concerns and considering ways to serve public interest. Such service may be done through protest, speeches, community service, or development of criticisms that are political and moral. Scholars should consider themselves good citizens who contribute to society through their scholarship. The result is that citizenship and scholarship work together to help explain the world (Palczewski 388-390). If a scholar separates herself/himself from citizenship, they may construct rhetorical criticism “behind a veil of

objectivity” (Palczewski 389). This is when a scholar uses a theory or selects a text only because it is a popular (Palczewski 389). Such a view of scholarship is problematic because the scholar views self as successful through publications rather than contributing to public discourse and citizenship.

Finally, good criticism is that which “tickles one’s brain” and is “inspired and inspiring” (Palczewski 390). Good rhetorical scholarship works through puzzles to make the pieces “fit” (Palczewski 390). Scholars should play with language because rhetorical scholarship is about analyzing a text and making rhetorical choices about the language within the essay (Palczewski 387).

Good criticism must be original, continues the ongoing scholarly conversation, is specific but general, focuses on a worthy text, situates the text within a larger context, has political implications, inspires and is inspiring. Ultimately, the rhetorical approach involves criticism, pursuit, and understanding of one’s own interests and experiences, helps a rhetorician learn to write insightfully for an audience, and evaluate “taken for granted” assumptions (Nothstine et al. 10-11, 16). Communication scholars Nothstine, Blair, and Copeland explain the importance of criticism:

Theoretical abstractions and methodological dictates can function to limit and direct the critic’s formative choices about what texts to examine and what to say about or ask of them. This limiting and directing function can help focus the critic’s concentration on potentially interesting things to write about, but it can also make it more difficult for the critic to exercise individual imagination, judgment, and intuition in making those same choices. (11)

Criticism is important because it allows a critic to think creatively beyond theoretical and methodological constraints. I have integrated the importance of



good criticism and its functions into my analysis in hopes of developing good criticism.

### Visual Rhetoric

Symbolic actions are enacted through visuals that “influence diverse publics” and as such visual rhetoric is “made meaningful through culturally derived ways of seeing or looking” (Olson, Finnegan, and Hope 3). Visual rhetoric is distinct from verbal rhetoric because the visual “implies the cultural practices of seeing and looking, as well as the artifacts produced in diverse communicative forms and media” (Olson et al. 3). Visual rhetoric involves audience engagement which “may reinforce, challenge, or restructure commonly held assumptions and values” (Olson et al. 3). Through visuals, reality is constituted through shaping views, values, and actions of the public (Olson et al. 3). In addition, visual rhetoric may provide possible refutation to arguments (Lake and Pickering).

A rhetorical approach to the study of visual symbols induces a critic to ask how visuals create, maintain, manipulate and challenge social realities. A critic analyzing visual symbols asks questions about what a visual does because the visual constitutes reality. The visual symbols are rhetorical representations of reality (Palczewski et al. 61). Sometimes visual symbols may be conflated with reality. This conflation occurs because “the way an event is recorded can shape people’s beliefs and attitudes...” (Palczewski et al. 61). A rhetorical approach to visuals induces scholars to be critical of visual symbols and ask how they shape social realities.

Visuals influence our ways of seeing the world, rhetorical scholars are induced to ask what visual symbols do. Simply put, visual symbols make arguments. Visual symbols are able to make arguments because they interact with people and have an audience present (Olson et al. 3). Visual rhetoric is important because visual media play a significant role and have tremendous power and influence (Mitchell 4-12). It is important to understand what visuals do because they present arguments. Individuals can develop visual strategies for political actions or even discourage political involvement because visuals can become the vehicle for revealing what has not been noticed before. By recognizing the importance of visual rhetoric, one can also learn to become critical toward such messages. For example, images of Muslim women circulate in the West creating a stereotypical impression that Muslim women are helpless and need saving.

Visuals also have the ability to appeal to state action by exemplifying a sense of agency (Hariman and Lucaites 21). For example, Hariman and Lucaites argue that the 1930s depression-era photo of the “Migrant Mother” by Dorothea Lange can represent “a moral appeal for state action” (Hariman and Lucaites 40). The photo does this by demonstrating and tracing a dominant narrative from the Great Depression through “a sense of individual worth and class victim age” (Hariman and Lucaites 55). Features of the photo and moments of emotional responses construct a dominant narrative of the Great Depression. Hariman and Lucaites argue,

The close portraiture creates a moment of personal anxiety as this specific woman, without name, silently harbors her fears for her children, while the dirty, ragged clothes and bleak setting signify the hard work and limited prospects of the laboring classes. The disposition of her body – and above all, the involuntary gesture of her right arm reaching up to touch her chin –

communicates related tensions. We see both physical strength and palpable worry: a hand capable of productive labor and an absent-minded motion that implies the futility of any action in such impoverished circumstances. The remainder of the composition communicates both a reflective defensiveness, as the bodies of the two standing children are turned inward and away from the photographer (as if from an impending blow), and a sense of inescapable vulnerability, for her body and head are tilted slightly forward, to allow each of the three children the comfort they need, her shirt is unbuttoned, and the sleeping baby is in a partially exposed position. (55)

Through these features, the photo appeals to state action because the visual image of the woman functions as a trope that represents a whole population of the US by communicating “the pervasive and paralyzing fear that widely acknowledged to be a defining characteristic of the depression and experienced by many American irrespective of income” (Hariman and Lucaites 55). This is one example of how photographs can do something in public discourse and have the ability to appeal to state action.

Visuals can also protest against the state (Hariman and Lucaites 208-217). For example, Hariman and Lucaites argue that the three iconic photos of the 1989 Tiananmen Square “Tank Man” by Jeff Widener, Charles Cole, and Stuart Franklin can represent “a critique of authoritarian regimes and a celebration of liberal-democratic values” (Hariman and Lucaites 211-215). This photo, for the Western media elite, represents the events that unfolded during the Tiananmen Square protests and “becomes a record of that historical event and by extension of political transformation underway in China and throughout the world” (Hariman and Lucaites 213-215). The photo represents political transformation through the features that display the lone individual, who uses his body and by doing so functions as a hero, to confront the state. Hariman and Lucaites argue, “the man

confronting the row of tanks is a picture of contrasts: the lone civilian versus the army; the vulnerable human body versus mechanized armor; “human hope and courage challenging the remorseless machinery of state power” (215). Through these features, the photo protests against the state because the visual image of the man functions as a trope that represents a whole population of those in China. This is one example of how photos have the ability to protest against the state.

Visuals can also reveal problematic state action by constituting displayed bodies as subjects, rather than citizens (Hariman and Lucaites 40). Photos depicting veiled Muslim women as the Other who needs to be saved is a paradigmatic example. Ayotte and Husain argue images “of the Afghan woman shrouded in the burqa have played a leading role in various public arguments that seek to justify U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks. For example, weeks after the 2001 World Trade Center attacks, President George W. Bush made references to veiled women in Afghanistan as “women of cover” who are oppressed (Stabile and Kumar 765). After President Bush’s references, mainstream media, such as *Business Week*, *Newsweek*, *New York Times*, and *Time*, began displaying, in their news stories, print and on the internet, images of veiled Afghan women as oppressed (Stabile and Kumar 765). This rhetorical construction of Afghan women as *objects* of knowledge legitimized U.S. military intervention under the rubric of ‘liberation’” (113).

By framing, through visuals, the veil becomes a signifier of oppression (Ayotte and Husain 117). Communication scholar Dana Cloud argues that in 2001, *Time*

*Magazine* and *Time.com* displayed photos of Afghan women who were dressed in burqas who were said to be oppressed in Afghanistan (290). Such images were displayed to justify US intervention into Afghanistan. In these photos, the burqa functions as a signifier of the East/West binary (Cloud 290). The way in which Afghan women wearing a burqa are framed provides an example of how photos do something problematic in public discourse.

Visuals are important to study because they have tremendous power, create virtual experiences through presence and absence, appeal to state action, protest against the state, and also reveal that state action is problematic. In this sense, visuals contribute to, and are part of, public discourse. Public discourse is also important to study because it reflects public dialogue about current issues that influence people's daily lives. Photos, in particular, are visuals that contribute to shaping public discourse because photographs are one way to capture, document, represent, create, and provide evidence of realities and historical moments (Barthes, *Camera Lucida; Image-Music-Text; New Critical Essays*; DeLuca and Demo; Sontag, *On Photography; Regarding*). With the snap of the camera, photos frame a moment of time that represents reality and history. For example, "Migrant Mother" is a photo that represents reality and a historical moment. The photo represents reality because it represents what people in the US may face during an economic crisis. At the same time, the photo represents a historical moment of how a family experienced the Great Depression. The "Migrant Mother" is one example of how photos capture, document, represent, create, and provide evidence of realities and historical moments.

Photos are important to study because they have played and continue to play, a vital role in our daily lives (Berger; Berger, Strauss, and Stoll; Mitchell; Perlmutter). According to J.T. Mitchell we are now in a visual era, or “pictorial turn,” where images have entered into public discourse. Images influence our day-to-day lives, demonstrating the importance of developing a critical lens to study visual culture. Mitchell, in *What Do Pictures Want?*, argues, photos “put our relation to the work into question, to make the relationality of image and beholder the field of investigation ... to turn analysis of pictures toward questions of process, affect, and to put in question the spectator position” (49). By interacting with photos everyday, a spectator are constantly positioning and repositioning their view in order to investigate and understand what photos want and do.

Photos should be understood differently from traditional understandings of looking at photos. Instead, as media and comparative literature scholar Ariella Azoulay argues, we should approach photos as a civil contract of photography. I lean heavily on Azoulay’s approach to photos because Azoulay’s civil contract, which “seeks to develop a concept of citizenship through the study of photographic practices and to analyze photography within the framework of citizenship as a status, an institution, and a set of practices,” recognizes that political relations exist within photos (23). Not only does she recognize political relations, but she also critiques a spectator’s liberal democratic understandings of citizenship and how this form of citizenship affects how a spectator interacts with a photo. Communication scholar Emily Dianne Cram argues, “Azoulay’s claims about the political relations forged within photography are contextualized by her broader critique of liberal democratic citizenship” (189).

In my analysis of an individualistic photo, similar to “Migrant Mother” and “Tank Man,” I take a different approach in that I argue that a spectator should not just look at photos that embody notions of liberal-democracy. Instead, if a spectator abandons their liberal-democratic citizenship lens and instead embraces the civil contract of photography, then a spectator can investigate what photos want and do and then engage in their responsibility to act (Azoulay 143).

In accepting the civil contract of photography, there are four obligations that must be met. First, a spectator must no longer look at a photo, but watch. Second, the spectator must be positioned as watching the photo through shared citizenship. Third, the spectator must engage in a call to action of sharing an obligation to struggle for those who are photographed. Finally, in order for the civil contract of photography to function, the spectator must shift from becoming the addressee to becoming the addresser. What follows is a review of Azoulay’s civil contract of photography and the four obligations of the civil contract.

The way in which a spectator views a photo is based on an instruction manual that outlines how a spectator may interact with a photo (Azoulay 146). Currently, in terms of photography, the spectator is using the wrong user’s manual (Azoulay 14). The current user’s manual is wrong because “it reduces photography to the photo and to the gaze concentrated on it in an attempt to identify the subject” (Azoulay 14). When the gaze is reduced to the subject, a spectator is not able to see the events that led up to or precede the moment in the snapshot (Azoulay 19). With the wrong user’s manual, a spectator look

at the subject through the lens of liberal-democratic citizenship, rather than the civil contract of photography. Furthermore, the current user manual is flawed because “it hinders the spectator’s understanding that the photograph – every photograph – belongs to no one” (Azoulay 14). The photograph does not belong to anyone because it is a set of relations between the camera, photographer, environments, photographed, and spectator (Azoulay 85). A spectator who abandons the wrong user’s manual and embraces a different manual of civil contract achieves shared citizenship (Azoulay 14).

A civil contract, not to be thought of as an actual document, is a tacit agreement. A civil contract is not a traditional contract because “concrete contracts are always seen in terms of the authorities who can limit, impose, induce, or invalidate contracts” (Azoulay 83). It is through the different user’s manual of civil contract that the negative implications of concrete contracts, such as “stable relations of exploitation and control,” can be recontextualized within the four obligations of the civil contract (Azoulay 117). A concrete contract, such as a lease, is a legal document that outlines expectations and conditions between parties. If a dispute erupts over the concrete contract, the law, which is maintained by the nation-state, becomes the ultimate authority. In the civil contract of photography citizenship is not about status or authority (Azoulay 14). Rather, citizenship is a “tool of a struggle or an obligation to others to struggle against injuries inflicted on those others, citizens and noncitizens” (Azoulay 14). By recontextualizing liberal-democratic citizenship as a struggle or obligation to others, exploitation, control, oppression, and violence can be understood differently and be acted upon. What follows is an analysis of each of these obligations to better the civil contract of photography as a



mutual agreement of shared citizenship, condition of being governed, and obligation to struggle with those who present emergency claims, the “situation involving calamity or mortal peril that demands immediate treatment,” in a photo (Azoulay 197).

The first obligation of the civil contract photography is a spectator’s agreement that watching a photo is a civic duty (Azoulay 159). Spectators are “citizens capable of intelligent deliberation and political agency – while also remaining aware of ... refeudalization and ideological control” (Hariman and Lucaites 40). A civil spectator has a duty to watch a photo and negotiate the relationship between the photographed and self because the spectator bears witness to an event (Azoulay 16). In addition, the civil contract is about experiencing events leading up to and progressing after the snapshot (Azoulay 19). The photograph is “evidence of the social relations which made it possible, and these cannot be removed from the visible “content” that it discloses to spectators who can agree or disagree on its actual content” (Azoulay 119). The photo functions as a space for social and political relations because a spectator can bear witness to the events that led up to and the events that proceed after the snapshot (Azoulay 19). It is necessary for a photo to function as a space for political and social relations because it is the only way that the relations between the camera, photographer, environments, photographed, and spectator can be understood (Azoulay 85). This is because liberal-democratic citizenship focuses heavily on the photographed and the one moment in the snapshot. Through the civil contract of photography the social and political conditions before and after the snapshot shed light on the complexity of emergency claims (Azoulay 19).

The second obligation is the position in which a spectator watches must be through shared citizenship. The spectator is not a citizen in the traditional sense of a relationship between an individual and state (Azoulay 77). Citizenship is not about status or a private property to be owned. Rather, citizenship is an obligation tool to others regardless of whether they are considered citizens or noncitizens of the state (Azoulay 78). In this sense, citizenship is also about recognizing that all citizens are governed (Azoulay 17). Such recognition is often forgotten because “the nation-state creates a bond of identification between citizens and the state through a variety of ideological mechanisms” (Azoulay 17). Citizenship is a form of equal relations among individuals, but can only become valid within and between the individuals that contribute to this understanding (Azoulay 81-127). Azoulay argues that we must rethink “the political sphere as a space of relations between the governed, whose political duty is first and foremost or at least also a duty toward one another, rather than toward the ruling power” (Azoulay 17). By being a citizen in the citizenry of photography, a spectator agrees to acknowledge the photographed subject’s citizenship. Azoulay argues for the civil contract of photography because photos are a space where individuals can create controversy and resistance against the state because they function as a “regime of statements” or arguments (181).

The third obligation is that the spectator has a shared obligation to struggle with those who present emergency claims within a photo. By engaging in a shared obligation to struggle, a spectator overcomes notions of flawed citizenship. Flawed citizenship is when a privileged spectator who has a government that shows them respect is a spectator

that “is removed from any calamity that threatens to affect them or any disaster that has already struck” (Azoulay 38). A spectator overcomes this flawed citizenship by giving priority to and placing first their civic responsibility of struggling with those that struggle. In this struggle, a spectator may experience emotional piety. However, shared citizenship of “mutual relations cannot be empathy or mercy” (Azoulay 17). Such a lens of empathy reduces “the role of the spectator to the act of judgment, eliminating his or her responsibility for what is seen in the photograph” (Azoulay 122). A spectator must share an obligation to struggle with those who present emergency claims.

The last obligation of the civil contract is that the spectator shifts from becoming the addressee to the addressor. Photos are important for understanding a relationship that is negotiated between the photographed and spectator (Azoulay 14, 375-411). With a printout of the photo, a spectator realizes that the photo is only a piece of paper, but at the same time, so much more (Azoulay 14). The photo presents a complex relationship between the spectator and the photographed. In this instance, the photo breaks the boundaries between the photographed, who is to be looked at and the spectator, who skims a photo (Azoulay 81-127). It is through the space of the photo that observation and action is framed by the subject/photographed (Azoulay 14). The photographed person comes to life when the spectator, the addressee, becomes the addressor who demonstrates a willingness to interact with the photographed (Azoulay 81-127). By being an addressor the spectator becomes part of the events that unfold and as a result, the civil contract can be a product of social change (Azoulay 189). When the addressee becomes the addressor, the addressor is now able to position their self within the emergency claim, transforming

citizenship by engaging in dialogue or talking back to what the photo says (Azoulay 186). The civil contract of photography is important to engage in because it alters the way in which citizenship is performed. A spectator should no longer look at photos, instead watch through shared citizenship and struggle, the events that unfold and engage in a call to action.

Photos are important because by establishing a relationship between the photographed and the spectator a virtual experience is created “in a particularly intense way, by making audience members feel as though they were present to witness an event. They offer a direct presentation instead of a discursive description” (Palczewski et al. 62). In this interaction, the photojournalist is the addressee’s proxy, a service provider who brings the eyes of the spectator to see what they see (Azoulay 14, 390). The photographer appears before the subject who demands recognition of her power and agency from the photographer, camera, and the state (Azoulay 14-15, 390).

Through such a relationship, the photographed subject’s presence is not just a one-time event. Rather, the photo presents a series of presences of the subject, which result in spectator gazing at the photo potentially for hours (Azoulay 359). In order to hide from the subject or to ignore the subject, a spectator may place the photo in a folder, burying it among paperwork (Azoulay 159). For a time period, the subject’s presence is gone. A spectator’s identification with the subject may come to a halt, but when the spectator sees the photo again the spectator’s identification with the subject continues. Without the spectator, the photo may not exist because the photo would not do anything. In order for the photo to do something, an addressee must be addressed. A photo can

address an addressor through two strategies: body rhetoric and the use of a visual ideograph.

### Body Rhetoric

Body rhetoric is “rhetoric that foregrounds the body as part of the symbolic act” (Palczewski et al. 66). The body is rhetorical because it engages in visibility politics and functions as proof of argument and/or can be an argument. Visibility politics is when a body that is rendered invisible becomes visible by placing the body on display. The rewards of engaging in visibility politics are “greater social acceptance, reduced cultural stereotypes, greater access to resources, or passage of policies that benefit the group” (Brouwer 119). In addition, the body can function as proof of argument and/or can be an argument by challenging dominant assumptions of how the body should be.

Visibility politics is about making bodies present and visible. For example, a tattooed body that wears a HIV/AIDS tattoo is stigmatized because s tattoo is viewed negatively and a HIV/AIDS body is associated as a “diseased” body (Brouwer 117-118). Brouwer argues that “the wearing of an HIV/AIDS tattoo is a precarious act, one that simultaneously disrupts expectations of appearance of health and challenges norms” because healthy able bodies display a HIV/AIDS tattoo (115-116).

The body functions as a form of display of constituting reality through presence and absence. Communication scholar Lawrence J. Prelli argues,

To display is to “show forth” or “make known,” which, in turn, implies its opposite—to conceal. That dynamic between revealing and concealing . . . is the core presumption behind rhetorical studies of display. . . . [which explore] how those situated resolutions conceal even as they reveal, what meanings they leave absent even as they make others present, whose interests they mute as well as

whose they emphasize, what they condemn as well as celebrate, and so on. This is so regardless of whether those rhetorics are enunciated through speech, . . . depicted visually, . . . or enacted through exhibitions, demonstrations, or performances. (11)

Presence and absence of bodies is important because what is displayed reveals or conceals reality. Burke makes this argument about language and terministic screens, but it is also applicable to bodies because all rhetoric selects particular realities, while deflecting others. Through selections, deflections, and reflections, bodies constitute the display of what is present and absent. A few examples such as Guerilla Girls, Emmett Till, Earth First! ACT UP, and Queer Nation demonstrate that bodies constitute the display of what is present and absent (Demo; Olson et al; DeLuca).

Guerilla Girls is a group of feminist women who are artists and art professionals (Demo 241). When engaging in protest and activism, the Guerilla Girls wear a black mask and are dressed in “gorilla drag” (Demo 244). Demo argues that “by attempting to embarrass galleries, critics, and museums into recognizing the institutionalized nature of art world sexism and racism, members put their own careers at risk” given that members of the Guerilla Girls work in the art world (244). The mask and dress help individual members maintain anonymity, provides refuge from retribution, and allow members to shift focus from their individual bodies to the collective act, focusing on the issues raised by the members. Through visibility politics, the Guerilla Girls make present arguments in public discourse that were once absent and challenge the dominant order of excluding women and people of color from the art world.

Another example of visibility politics is the photo of Emmett Till. In 1955, Emmett Till was brutally murdered in Mississippi at a young age because he had supposedly whistled at a White woman during a time when Black males were disciplined for interacting with White women. As a result of his murder, Till's mother, Mamie Till Mobley, made the brave decision to hold an open casket funeral in order for people to witness what hate had done to her son's body. Till's body had been mutilated. In the media, photos of Till's body began to circulate. Photos of Till's mutilated body appeared next to a family photo in which Till was smiling (Olson et al. 202).

Till's body engages in visibility politics because it makes present the horrors of racism, something that was absent from White discourse. By bravely making the decision to display Till's body, Mamie Till Mobley forced a public discussion of the horrific event and the larger issue of racism. Harold and DeLuca argue that the photos of Till's body constituted "an event – a rhetorical event that require[d] a response" (268). Till is another example of how bodies not only engage in visibility politics but also do something in public discourse.

The last example of how bodies engage in visibility politics is by contemporary activist groups. Earth First!, ACT UP, and Queer Nation, contemporary activist groups, engage in visibility politics by "performing unorthodox political tactics that highlight bodies as resources for argumentation and advocacy" (DeLuca, "Unruly Arguments" 9). As DeLuca argues, "it is the body that is at stake – its meanings, its possibilities, its care, and its freedoms" ("Unruly Arguments" 17). Bodies must be rewritten because dominant mainstream discourses render the body invisible (DeLuca, "Unruly Arguments" 17). By

engaging in visibility politics, groups such as Earth First!, ACT UP, and Queer Nation are able to argue against dominant assumptions of their bodies. Visibility politics has been effective for ACT UP and Queer Nation because they engage in an “in-your-face body rhetoric” (DeLuca, “Unruly Arguments” 17). Visibility politics make it so that bodies of Earth First!, ACT UP, and Queer Nation members are seen by those who maintain dominant assumptions. This tactic places the body “front and center in their argument for it is the body that is at stake – its meanings, its possibilities, its care, and its freedoms” (DeLuca, “Unruly Arguments” 17).

By engaging in body rhetoric, these activist groups practice “a form of argumentation that is an important manifestation of” constitutive rhetoric (DeLuca, “Unruly Arguments” 10). Constitutive rhetoric is “the mobilization of signs, images, and discourses for the articulation of identities, ideologies, consciousnesses, communities, publics, and cultures” (DeLuca, “Unruly Arguments” 10). Bodies are constitutive in that they are “enmeshed in a turbulent stream of multiple and conflictual discourse that shape what they mean in particular contexts” (DeLuca, “Unruly Arguments” 12). Given that bodies are constitutive, it makes sense that they can function as proof of argument and/or can be an argument.

Body argument, according to communication scholar DeLuca, is when “political bodies constitute a nascent body rhetoric that deploys bodies as a pivotal resource for the crucial practice of public argumentation” (“Unruly Arguments” 10). Bodies form and/or are public arguments. For example, Earth First! activists “use their bodies to perform their arguments” and by doing so enact “a mode of argument that supports the substance



of their argument” (DeLuca, “Unruly Arguments” 15). These activists utilize their bodies to refute dominant media outlets framing them as “terrorists or freedom fighters” (DeLuca, “Unruly Arguments” 16). By doing so, bodies are “not merely flags to attract attention for the argument but the site and substance of the argument itself” (DeLuca, “Unruly Arguments” 10). Bodies that attract attention for arguments are able to challenge dominant norms that attempt to discipline them.

By engaging in visibility politics and functioning as argument, bodies are subject to disciplining and placed at risk (Foucault). For example, homosexual bodies are sites for discipline. Such disciplining of bodies occurs by labeling homosexual bodies as dangerous or diseased. Labeling homosexual bodies in this manner is a result of the cultural presence of AIDS and the disease’s categorization as a “gay disease.” To argue against such assumptions, ACT UP and Queer Nation activists display their openly homosexual bodies to the public (DeLuca, “Unruly Arguments” 17). By displaying their bodies, activists place their bodies at risk ranging from “verbal abuse to physical beats to death (with the horrific murder of Matthew Shepherd serving as a ghastly reminder)” (DeLuca, “Unruly Arguments” 17). By placing their bodies in harm’s ways, activists enact “a defiant rhetoric of resistance” (DeLuca, “Unruly Arguments” 17). In such a resistance activists refuse to be marginalized, silenced, and quarantined (DeLuca, “Unruly Arguments” 19). Another example is a wearer of the HIV/AIDS tattoo whose “tattoo is meant to “remind everyone” ... that its wearer is indeed HIV positive and not *just* AIDS-aware, AIDS sympathetic, or fashionably political” (Brouwer 121). In such a

resistance the wearer of the HIV/AIDS tattoo also refuses to be silenced and marginalized.

Through their bodies, ACT UP and Queer Nation activists challenge the hegemonic order, which attempts to discipline them via “medical and homophobic discourses that constitute gay bodies as diseased plague carriers bearing the mark of God’s disfavor” (DeLuca, “Unruly Arguments” 17). Their bodies challenge the dominant order by being on public display, which critiques dominant constructions of the homosexual body as being riddled with AIDS.

Bodies engage in visibility politics, making present what may once have been absent. Bodies also function as proof of argument and/or are the argument. This next section reviews literature on the visual ideograph because the text I analyze not only engages in body rhetoric, but also functions as a visual ideograph.

### Visual Ideograph

An ideograph, as McGee argues, is “an ordinary language term found in political discourse. It is a high-order abstraction representing collective commitment to a particular but equivocal and ill-defined normative goal. It warrants the use of power, excuses behavior and belief which might be equivocal and ill-defined normative goal” (McGee, *The “Ideograph”* 15). In addition, an ideograph is “culture-bound” (McGee, *The “Ideograph”* 15). An example of a culture-bound ideograph is <liberty>. <Liberty> is an ideograph if it is used in reference to being one of the core values the US was founded upon. However, the term liberty is non-ideographic when it is not bound culturally such as the following sentence: “Since I resigned by position, I am at liberty to

accept your offer” (McGee, *The “Ideograph”* 15). Given that an ideograph is “an ordinary language term” and a “high-order abstraction” that “warrants the use of power” and is “culture-bound,” understanding what an ideograph does for collective identity is important (McGee, *The “Ideograph”* 15).

The rhetorical function of ideographs is to create, reinforce, and interpret collective identity and link it to ideology (McGee). Ideographs do something for collective identity in the sense that they “both unite and separate human beings” (McGee, *The “Ideograph”* 8). For example, ideographs constitute “the people” within public discourse. McGee argues that “the people” are called upon, in the sense of collective identity, when “it is necessary to collectivize the masses or to legitimize particular acts of governments” (*The “Ideograph” as 79*). Ideographs are particularly effective in mobilizing “the people” because they are within everyday discourse. “The people” is “enshrined in the Constitution, some in law, some merely in conventional usage” (McGee, *The “Ideograph”* 13). As a result, when government or its political leaders call on “the people,” unification of values is appealed to and dissent is diminished. This example demonstrates that ideographs are effective because they become part of public discourse. Values are associated with ideographs, which constitute collective identity.

Ideographs function rhetorically by linking ideology with ideographs. Ideographs function in this manner because they are not just “high order” abstractions, but create, reinforce, and interpret collective identity and public dialogue (McGee, *The “Ideograph”* 15). Ideology links to ideographs because connotations of ideographs can alter as time

and space do. McGee argues, “awareness of the way an ideograph can be meaningful now is controlled in large part by what it meant *then*” and “when we engage ideological argument, when we cause ideographs to do work in explaining, justifying, or guiding policy in specific situations, the relationship of ideographs changes” (McGee, *The Ideograph*” 10-13). Ideographs make sense in the context of events that foster or reinforce ideology through verbal and visual rhetoric.

Communication scholars Janis L. Edwards and Carol K. Winkler are the first to expand McGee’s understanding of verbal ideograph to visuals, arguing that visual ideographs exist. Edwards and Winkler argue that that a parodied image can function as a visual ideograph (290). A visual ideograph complies with the characteristics that McGee outlines with the exception that an ideograph must be a “language term” (Edwards and Winkler 297). For example, <clash of civilization> and <white man’s burden> function to justify the 2001 US invasion of Afghanistan (Cloud 288). These ideographs reinforce the imperialist ideology of the hegemonic elite through verbal and visual rhetoric by constructing veiled Afghan, Muslim women as the Other who need saving from Muslim men (Cloud 288).

The <clash of civilizations> and <white man’s burden> ideographs are presented in the 2001 *Time.com* and *Time* magazine images of veiled Muslim women (Cloud 290). The photos display, side-by-side, the Self, the US, and the Other veiled Muslim women. This visual construction enacts the <clash of civilizations> depicting women in burqas as helpless and oppressed, while the US acts as a savior (Cloud 289). Communication

scholar Dana Cloud argues, “this binary construction strengthens national identification [of the US], entailing rigid disidentification with and scapegoating of the Other ... In conveying this opposition, the photographs [index] the <clash of civilizations>” (290). Through the use of the <clash of civilizations> in photos, US audience members identify with war and values of “democracy-cum-capitalism” (Cloud 290). This example demonstrates that visual ideographs function in the same way as verbal ideographs: creating, reinforcing, and interpreting collective identity and linking to ideology.

Another example of visual ideographs is how <man> and <woman> are depicted in images. During the golden age postcards in 1909, the woman suffrage controversy had reached its peak. Cartoon postcards opposed woman suffrage and made present verbal arguments during this time period. Catherine Palczewski argues these postcards “offer visual forms of the arguments against suffrage that highlight the coarsening effect the vote would have on women; the postcards offer visual indexes to measure the departure from the verbal ideograph of <woman> caused by suffrage” (374). The ideograph of <woman> is placed in context of its usage. For example, the meaning of the visual ideograph of <woman> in the postcards is that <woman> is White (Palczewski 385). The postcards are linked to ideology of what <woman> is and <man> is, presenting men as unmasculine or feminine and voting women as unfeminine or masculine, as attempts to discipline the public (Palczewski 387). This provides another example of how visual ideographs function within public discourse.

Visual ideographs are important to study because they are part of everyday lives. Politically, visual ideographs are powerful because they make sense of collective identity

and are linked to ideology. Visual ideographs can motivate populations to become one, which can be helpful in a political protest against an oppressive regime. However, visual ideographs can be problematic when they are used for a state's interests, at the expense of framing a population as helpless and oppressed.

Visuals are important to study because they provide proof and/or are arguments. This chapter has synthesized the scholarly discussion over visual rhetoric in terms of photos, bodies, and visual ideographs. Chapter 3 synthesizes the scholarly discussion on imperialist ideology and how the hegemonic elite frame veiled Muslim women as oppressed and helpless. Chapter 5 utilizes the established vocabulary of this chapter to build on the argument that the strategies of a photo, body rhetoric, and visual ideograph all function together to challenge dominant Western assumptions of veiled Muslim women.

## CHAPTER 3

EGYPTIAN REVOLUTIONS INEXTRICABLY TIED TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS –  
FROM PAST TO PRESENT

In order to use the correct user's manual of civil contract, this chapter previews important historical moments in Egypt's history in order to understand contemporary protests and the role of women in them. Egypt's long history of protests against colonial and Egyptian government contains three major revolutions in Egyptian politics: 1919, 1952, and 2011. Understanding the history of protests in Egypt is important because it provides a spectator with a different lens through which the spectator can experience and understand the events and conditions that led up to the snapshot. Through this lens, a spectator is able to shift from looking at the photo to watching the photo, one of the four obligations for entering the civil contract of photography.

This chapter is important for three reasons. First, Egypt is a country in Northern Africa to be occupied and colonized by a Western, Christian Power. Second, Egypt has experienced a number of nationalist movements that excited a majority of the Egyptian population. Finally, this chapter is important because protests always repeated debates about women's rights. An examination of this historical connection may help to understand the importance of Dalsh's photo. To begin, I argue that women were instrumental in the 1919 Revolution, which resulted in Egypt's independence from British rule.

### 1919 Revolution

The 1919 Revolution was widespread and had greater support among Egyptians (Abi-Hamad 1). The 1919 Revolution began in March 1919 when a male revolutionary leader and Wafd Party member, Saad Zaghlul, and other members of the Wafd Party, a political party favorable among Egyptians, began to organize at the grassroots level against the Egyptian government. Fearing social unrest, the British arrested Zaghlul and exiled him to the Republic of Malta, a southern European country in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. The British attempt to halt the revolt by exiling the revolution's leader failed. Egyptians gathered together to protest against British occupation of Egypt.

The revolution involved participation from both women and men from different religious backgrounds. However, women played a significant role in mobilization efforts. On March 16, 1919, 150 to 300 veiled upper-class Egyptian women protested against British occupation. In this protest, women were led by Safia Zaglul, Huda Sharawi, and Muna Fahmi. The March 16, 1919, demonstration was one of the biggest in the 1919 Revolution. By March 31, 1919, at least 3,000 Egyptians were killed by British soldiers. By July 25, 1919, at least 800 more Egyptians were killed.

As a result of widespread Egyptian mobilization, the British government decided to offer a compromise in order to halt the protest. The British government asked Zaghlul to compromise with them, but Zaghlul had "neither the appetite nor the courage to oppose Egyptian popular will and arrive at an acceptable compromise with Great Britain" (Abi-Hamad 2). After Zaghlul's imprisonment, women increased mobilization efforts.



Women played a monumental role in the 1919 Revolution because they assisted with mobilization efforts. Through mobilization efforts, Egyptian women turned Egyptian nationalistic dissent against British rule into a “*bona fide* feminist movement” (Ramdani, par. 2). Egyptian feminists united with Egyptian nationalists. Journalist and World Economic Forum Young Global Leader Nabila Ramdani argues:

Two dynamic and overlapping groups – nationalists and feminists – combined to create an impressive campaigning force – one which would have a compelling effect on the progress of Egyptian society. Radical demands being made by a pioneering women’s movement strengthened the nationalist cause. In turn, feminists gained from their close association with the nationalists, using their connections to build up their own power base. (par. 4)

Feminists and nationalists protested together under the slogan, ‘Egypt for the Egyptians’ (Ramdani, par. 4). Through such a slogan, it is clear that nationalism was the rallying point for feminists. By linking women’s rights to nationalism, Ramdani argues, “the women’s movement increased its strength by growing up in parallel with the Egyptian nationalist movement of the 20th century” (par. 6). Egyptians came to a consensus that women played a fundamental role in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution, thereby setting the stage for the women’s movement (Baron 123).

Men and women writers reported on the 1919 Egyptian Revolution. Men writers “stressed the inspirational value of veiled women marching” as “even the women” can protest (Baron 123). In contrast, women writers “acknowledged and manipulated female symbols, but they also emphasized women’s solid contributions to the revolution” (Baron 123). Women writers understood the importance of women protestors, in particular elite women, who “helped to erode colonial control, attract international attention, and build

national unity” (Baron 123). However, women writers were also critical of elite women for marching separately from working-class women (Baron 123). Even though women came together in order to advocate for women’s rights, class distinctions remained, dividing women. This demonstrates the political complexity of women advocating for rights in Egypt.

Writers reported on the role of women’s participation in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution, and through these reports, constructed women as part of collective memory. Reports were not the only way that women were constructed as part of collective memory. Photographs of the 1919 Egyptian Revolution provided evidence of women’s demonstrations within collective memory. Baron argues:

Photographs became a trigger for remembering the revolution and shaping the women’s demonstrations as an iconic moment. In time, the veiled woman became the model militant, a major symbol of the national struggle, and an abstraction of the nation itself, while the details of the original events receded in importance. (123)

Photos from 1919 display elite Egyptian women as wearing thin face veils. The photos were an important medium for constructing women as part of collective memory because the photos provided evidence that women were instrumental in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution and that veiled women were politically active women.

The 1919 Egyptian Revolution was successful in removing the British from governmental rule. Egypt achieved independence in 1922. After achieving independence, the Wafd party, the political party that governed Egypt after the British were removed from governing, pushed Egyptian women to the margins (Ramdani, par. 3). Women were pushed to the sidelines as male nationalists who once advocated for women’s rights no

longer supported equal rights of all Egyptians once Egypt had achieved independence. This demonstrates that even though women were instrumental in assisting Egypt's independence from Western rule, women's rights remained politically marginalized. In the next section I argue that the 1952 Egyptian Revolution paved the way for future Egyptian protests to occur against colonial rule and demand human rights, in particular women's rights.

### 1952 Revolution

Despite achieving independence in 1922, British influence continued. In 1952, Egyptians had blocked the Suez Canal, an important access into Egypt that promotes trade. Given British influence, the Suez Canal had helped to promote the British economy. The blocking of the Suez Canal was only the start of the resistance that Egyptians demonstrated against Western influence.

A week after the Suez Canal disturbances, anti-British protests began to erupt around and near the Suez Canal. British soldiers who were patrolling the Suez Canal came under fire. Egyptian police officers joined anti-British efforts, killing British soldiers. As a result, British soldiers entered Ismailia, a city west of the Suez Canal. The conflict escalated to the point where British officers demanded that Egyptian police officers evacuate the Ismailia Police Station on January 25, 1952. The British soldiers surrounded the police station with tanks. The Egyptian police officers refused British demands and were killed. Photos were taken of the event and circulated, causing riots throughout Egypt (Chigbo, par. 2).

The 1952 Revolution began the day after Egyptian police officers were killed, January 26, 1952, and was led by army officers who called themselves “The Free Officers Movement” (Chigbo, par. 2). The initial goal of the movement was to overthrow King Farouk I, who was complicit with Western violence against Egyptians. Similar to the 1919 Revolution, women began to mobilize Egyptians against Western influence through nationalist discourse.

In contrast to the 1919 Revolution, women were able to mobilize more Egyptians in the 1952 Revolution. Anthropology scholar Nadjie Al-Ali argues “the cultural gap between different women activists widened with the participation of women from a broader class base” where “lifestyles, social standing and life opportunities were more similar” (98). Through a broader class-base, Egyptian women were able to construct a collective identity that was larger than any previous movements before it.

As the movement mobilized more Egyptians the goal of the movement became more ambitious demanding the abolition of the monarchy and the creation of a democracy (Baron 273). The organized, collectivized masses achieved their goals. As a result, people throughout West Asia and North Africa were inspired to undergo revolutions in their own countries such as Algeria, Kenya, and Sudan. On June 18, 1953, the monarchy was abolished and Egypt became a republic (Jankowski 65).

In contrast to the results of the 1919 Revolution, the 1952 Revolution opened space in the public sphere and provided more opportunities for women. In 1956 the Constitution granted women political rights and allowed them to retain governmental positions. Women were now able to compete with men for top leadership positions. For

example, in 1962 Abu Zaid was the first woman to hold the position of Egyptian cabinet minister. The 1919 Revolution demonstrated that women had tremendous power in organizing mobilization efforts against Western, colonial influence. Egyptian women emulated mobilization efforts by women in previous protests and learned from past failings such as the failing to remove the British from governmental rule. The 1952 Revolution helped women advocate for their own rights, finally granting women political rights. Despite the victory of women being granted political rights, women's rights remained politically complex. For example, even though women were encouraged to obtain an education and jobs, they were told by women and men that their primary role was to serve the family in order to fulfill religious obligations (Guenena and Wassef 26-27). The complexity of women's rights continued into the future. In this next section, I argue that the 2011 Egyptian Revolution was a demonstration against colonial rule represented by the Mubarak regime and Western influence, in particular the United States' influence.

### 2011 Revolution

The Tunisian uprising began on December 17, 2011 when Mohammed Bouazuzi, a producer seller, covered himself in paint thinner and then set himself on fire as a form of protest against the state (Rifai, par. 1). Bouazuzi had set himself on fire after police had taken his produce stand and beat him because he did not have a permit (Rifai, par. 2). As a form of resistance to the police violence and the state's oppression, Bouazuzi utilized his body. Al Jazeera reporter Ryan Rifai argues, "Bouazuzi's act of desperation highlights the public's boiling frustration over living standards, police violence, rampant

unemployment, and a lack of human rights” (par. 2). As protests erupted throughout Tunisia against the state, Egyptians began to organize for a protest of their own. For two weeks, after Bouazuzi’s protests, mobilization efforts, primarily organized by women, were underway in Egypt. For example, on January 18, 2011, Egyptian woman and anti-government protestor Asmaa Mahfouz posted a video blog on the social media network *Facebook* to promote the protest planned for January 25, 2011 (Ahmed, par. 10). A few days after her initial post, the video had gone viral, with a re-post on *YouTube* (Ahmed, par. 10). Egyptians were given hope that if Tunisians could overthrow their oppressive government, then Egyptians could do the same. Many were skeptical that a mass demonstration would occur. Given the historical nature of mass protests, it makes sense that a mass demonstration could occur. However, past mass mobilization had not reached more than a few hundred protestors. Social media tools helped in mass mobilization efforts because Egyptians, women and men, were able to communicate with one another and overcome the Mubarak regime’s propaganda. For example, Mahfouz’s video blog was the first to be posted and has been credited as starting the 2011 Egyptian Revolution (Ahmed, par. 10). For the first time in over thirty years, Egyptians were able to see uploaded demonstration videos on social media networks, such as *Facebook* and *YouTube*, as the demonstrations were occurring (Ahmed, par. 10; Sussman, par. 2).

The Egyptian protests began on January 25, 2011. The date has historical significance as described in the previous section. In Egypt, January 25 is considered a national holiday and is known as National Police Day. The day commemorates police

officers who were killed when they refused British demands to evacuate the Ismailia Police Station on January 25, 1952 (Naber, par. 8).

During the protests, two types of military officials were present. The armed and violent forces were Central Security Forces (CSF) officers who are an Egyptian paramilitary force, while the non-violent forces were the Egyptian army. The Egyptian army has been viewed as Egypt's heroes among Egyptians. As the Egyptian army took to the streets of Tahrir Square, the protestors believed they were there to help protect them. However, the Mubarak regime deployed the Egyptian army in hopes of scaring protestors into going home. Contrary to the regime's hopes, Egyptians celebrated the arrival of the army by dancing in the streets (Naber, par. 8).

The army did not scare off protestors, so the Mubarak regime utilized "thugs" to sexually assault women in order to discipline and control their role in protests. The Mubarak regime utilized "thugs" because they could not be distinguished easily from the protestors. The "thugs" were not dressed in combat gear. Rather, they had on everyday clothing, which allowed them to blend in with protestors. In the January 25<sup>th</sup> protest, women chose to not allow these sexual assaults to shame and terrorize them from being equal members within Egyptian politics. Instead, Egyptian women posted advice on social media networks such as *Facebook* and *Twitter* that mentioned to wear extra clothing to protect themselves from assaults. It was in this uprising that Egyptian women demonstrated that they would no longer allow the Mubarak regime to discipline their bodies. Women not only protested in Tahrir Square, but also slept in the streets. Women found that the streets were safe and they were not assaulted while sleeping. The streets

were safe because protestors had pushed the “thugs” out of Cairo and, as a result, women were not harassed. For example, when “thugs” came to disrupt a sit-in in Tahrir Square “anti-Mubarak demonstrators fought back and resisted and protected Tahrir Square from being taken over by these thugs” (Barrows-Friedman, par. 6). By pushing the “thugs” out of Cairo, women were not harassed. Many Egyptian women echoed this sentiment by saying, “It’s the first time that I have never been harassed in Cairo” (Naber, par. 9).

Women protested in the streets not just against harassment, but also against oppression, suppression, and political corruption. For example, Egyptian women exposed contradictions in “US discourses on democracy and US practices” (Naber, par. 10). While protesting activists and feminists confront the US’s imperial relations with the Mubarak regime by showing outrage “over the US’ unanswered loyalty to Mubarak as well as Obama’s backing of vice president Omar Suleiman” (Naber, par. 9-11). Egyptians were outraged by the US’s continued loyalty to the Mubarak regime when the US was aware of the many abuses people face under the regime’s rule. Even US-Egyptian reporter Mona Tehawy spoke out by saying that “the US’ “stability” comes at the expense of freedom and dignity of the people of my or any country” (Naber, par. 9).

Media sources in the US did not begin to cover the Egyptian protests until January 28, 2011. When violence erupted, people in the West began to hear about the Egyptian uprisings. On January 28, the Mubarak regime ordered that internet and mobile companies suspend services in order to disrupt the communication of protestors. However, Egyptians overcame this attempt of control. On January 28, US President Barack Obama made a statement regarding the protests. Obama states:



The United States has a close partnership with Egypt and we've cooperated on many issues, including working together to advance a more peaceful region. But we've also been clear that there must be reform — political, social, and economic reforms that meet the aspirations of the Egyptian people. In the absence of these reforms, grievances have built up over time. When President Mubarak addressed the Egyptian people tonight, he pledged a better democracy and greater economic opportunity. I just spoke to him after his speech and I told him he has a responsibility to give meaning to those words, to take concrete steps and actions that deliver on that promise. (“Remarks by the President,” par. 5-6)

Obama goes on to say “The United States always will be a partner in pursuit of that future. And we are committed to working with the Egyptian government and the Egyptian people — all quarters — to achieve it” (“Remarks by the President,” par. 9). Obama concludes by saying, “the United States will continue to stand up for the rights of the Egyptian people and work with their government in pursuit of a future that is more just, more free, and more hopeful” (“Remarks by the President,” par. 12). In this speech, Obama struggles to find the balance between supporting Mubarak and the people of Egypt. Obama finally makes a statement defending the rights of Egyptians. However, such a statement is surprising given the US's complicity with Egypt's dictatorship for over thirty years. Obama struggles in this statement because Mubarak's dictatorship “was hardly troublesome to Washington in light of the strategic benefits the Egyptian leader provided”: keeping the Suez Canal open, peace with Israel, and fighting against Islamists (“Why Washington,” par. 1).

Then, on February 11, 2011, President Obama in a speech addressing the nation and the world pledged his support to Egypt while acknowledging ties to the Mubarak regime by saying, “We stand ready to provide whatever assistance is necessary — and

asked for — to pursue a credible transition to a democracy” (“Remarks by the President,” par. 4). In the evening, after 18 days of protests, Mubarak finally stepped down as president of Egypt.

Now, Egypt is in a state of uncertainty. For over thirty years, Egyptians have only known and been governed by an authoritarian regime. Currently, Egypt is transitioning governmental rule from an authoritarian regime to a democracy, modeling the US government. For example, Egypt’s recent elections model US elections. This notion may be problematic given the historical influence that Western culture has on Egypt and West Asia. Egyptians may struggle to embrace such a model because Western influence has historically been prevalent and has done little to help the people of Egypt overcome poverty, oppression, and suppression.

In 2005, the Human Development Report (HDR) for Egypt indicated the country’s illiteracy rate was in the top 10 of all countries in the world. The HDR indicated that 45 percent of Egyptian girls and women over the age of 15 years old were illiterate. In 2011, 42 percent of women in Egypt could not read (Otterman, par. 8). From 2000-2004, 67.2% of men in Egypt could read (Mellor 20). As these statistics demonstrate, illiteracy is an issue for men and women in Egypt, but illiteracy is worse of women. Illiteracy rates are only one example of how women are rendered invisible and powerless by the Mubarak regime. Within his reign as Egypt’s ruler there are almost no political leadership positions held by women. In 2010, eight of 454 Parliament seats were held by women (Otterman, par. 8). As a result, Parliament passed a law in 2010 mandating that 64 new seats in the house must go to women. Even though this new law,

which is set to expire in 2020, increased the number of women serving as representatives in Egyptian government, it represents less than 15 percent of the total number of Parliament seats (Hill, par. 3-5). In politics, the Mubarak regime rendered women invisible.

Lack of women's literacy and representation in politics is only the beginning of the invisibility and powerlessness that Egyptian women face. Egyptian women also face sexual harassment. In 2008, a survey from the Center of Women's Rights found that 83 percent of Egyptian women faced harassment (Lindsey, par. 8). Attempting to prosecute does little for women when police officers are often accused of harassment themselves. Sexual harassment and assault was used as a tactic by the Mubarak regime to discipline women protestors. For example, in 2004 demonstrations began against the Mubarak regime and women were part of them. Government-backed thugs began sexually attacking female protestors in order to scare them off (Lindsey, par. 2-5). A similar situation occurred in 2011 when CBS correspondent Lara Logan was sexually assaulted by a mob of men (Lindsey, par. 1). It is unclear if the men who attacked her were government-backed, but her assault demonstrates that sexual harassment and assault in Egypt renders women invisible and powerless. Even though she was a US citizen, Logan was subjugated to violence within Egyptian society because she identified as a woman. While sexual assault is not okay and certainly is a problem in Egypt, this violence should not be used as a guise for US national security interests, such as the case of President Bush and the invasion of Afghanistan which was justified under the guise of women's oppression (Stabile and Kumar 765).

Research on Egypt and West Asia may help to negotiate problematic historical influence that Western culture has on these cultures. Research on women in North Africa and West Asia, historically and today, is important because it counteracts dominant Western myths that veiled Muslim women are oppressed. This research discredits misconceptions about veiled Muslim women as being oppressed and never being able to access public space. Scholar David R. Blanks argues that “Because history in the Middle East is so highly politicized, the point still needs to be made that women participated in major historical events and that feminism is not a [W]estern import” (57). We need to acknowledge that women have participated in protests, just as men have. Just as men who protest in hope of achieving democratization, women protest in hopes of achieving the same goal. Dominant assumptions that veiled Muslim women cannot exercise agency is challenged when a lone veiled Muslim woman is displayed as protesting in a photo.

What is important to understand from this chapter is that Egypt’s history has led to the events that unfolded during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. Protests were not in isolation, but in context of a continued resistance against oppression and colonial influence. The photo unveils this complex history when a spectator abandons the wrong user’s manual and using a different user’s manual of civil contract to view and interact with the photo. Through the civil contract of photography and by watching, instead of looking, a spectator begins to realize that the photo isn’t as entirely different from past events nor is the photo all that distinctive. The photo represents a history of

colonialism and oppression that has been resisted by veiled Muslim women. By watching, a spectator realizes that veiled Muslim women have always played an instrumental role in mobilization efforts in Egyptian social movements. In addition, watching reveals that Egypt has a history of emergency claims where Egypt has been a colonized nation for far too long and Egyptians have been and continue to resist. Through shared citizenship and struggle, a spectator is called to action. This call to action may take form in daily conversations or at the political level of engaging politicians. Point being, the photo unveils a history of colonialism and oppression that now becomes part of public dialogue.

## CHAPTER 4

### IMPERALISTIC LOGIC OF VEILING PRACTICES

Imperialistic logic often associates images of veiled Muslim women as being oppressed by Muslim men whom the United States must confront in order to be the hero or savior of victimized, Muslim women. Such logic is problematic because it denies women agency, essentializes veiled Muslim women as victims, masks the root causes of violence, justifies and perpetuates violence against women's bodies who have been deemed otherized, encourages linking humanitarian discourse with warfare in order to advance US interests, and demonizes Muslim men. In order to protest against this dominant, imperialist logic, I argue that through the photo veiled Muslim women can protest oppression and repression of this imperialist logic. In this chapter, I analyze how the hijab is a visual rhetorical choice that can function politically.

#### Imperialistic Logic

War discourse raises questions about the rhetorical choices, moral and political, for justifying the use of such discourse. A political figure or government may consider utilizing imperialist discourse in order to further their country's economic and political interests. Time and again imperialist discourse has been used by colonial powers to advance their own interests. In order to invade a country or justify war, the aggressor often develops an argument for such action. As a result, imperialist aggression draws upon women's bodies as justification for the US to invade countries, for example Kosovo and Afghanistan. By invading these "savage countries" to protect women's bodies, the

US appears as a virtuous hero, saving helpless women from an enemy (Jewett and Lawrence 21-36).

In order for the US to be seen as a hero, violence must be occurring that women need to be protected from. Therefore, imperialist discourse encourages linking warfare with humanitarianism. Using a moral, humanitarian frame justifies intervention by the US, otherizes a population, and labels them as *powerless* victims who need help from a powerful Western state. An example of such discourse is justifying war to liberate Muslim women from the control of men and Islam. Progressive discourses of liberation justify imperialist invasions in West Asia and North Africa, in particular Afghanistan and Iraq. For example, George W. Bush argues that women in Afghanistan are forced into veiling practices as oppressed bodies and need the US to save them (Stabile and Kumar). As a result, the Bush administration utilizes women's liberation as a justification for US imperialism (Stabile and Kumar). First Lady Laura Bush argues in a 2001 address that intervention into Afghanistan is helping Afghan women when she says,

Because of our recent military gains in much of Afghanistan, women are no longer imprisoned in their homes. They can listen to music and teach their daughters without fear of punishment. Yet the terrorists who helped rule that country now plot and plan in many countries. And they must be stopped. The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women. (Bush, par. 4)

Through this rhetoric First Lady Bush argues that violence has been inflicted against otherized, veiled Muslim women's bodies, which justifies intervention. First Lady Bush argues that, thanks to the US who functioned as a hero for women in Afghanistan, and with intervention, veiled Muslim women are now liberated. This monolithic Western

understanding of third-world women creates and sustains assumptions about Muslim women, reducing the Muslim experience to a singular understanding of the veil (Hegde 164). Universalism establishes binaries of West/East, modern/traditional, secular/religious, freedom/oppression, which suggest that Muslim communities face marginalization and isolation, thus creating divisions among the population where the dominant group (the West) views the East as “backwards” or “bad” (Said, *Orientalism; Culture and Imperialism; Covering Islam; Power, Politics, and Culture*; Scott 146).

Interventions are justified when the US argues that women’s bodies are at risk because violence in a country has escalated creating uncontrollable havoc. According to Eastern Indian feminist theorist and scholar Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, by arguing that violence is uncontrollable and that women’s bodies are at risk, imperialist rhetoric justifies “white men saving brown women from brown men” (296). The US is able to depict itself as a savior for veiled Muslim women. In the case of Afghanistan, one dominant reason for invading Afghanistan was to protect Afghan women from Afghan men. The implication of such logic is that it denies women’s agency and reinscribes violence. As communication scholars Kevin J. Ayotte and Mary E. Husain argue, “representations of the women of Afghanistan as gendered slaves in need of ‘saving’ by the West constitute epistemic violence, the construction of a violent knowledge of the third-world Other that erases women as subjects in international relations” (113). Instead of women speaking for themselves, the US speaks for them, perpetuating the idea that veiled Muslim women are helpless and always need the US to act as their savior. For example, communication scholar Dana Cloud analyzed *Time.com* and *Time* magazine



photographs of veiled Muslim women in Afghanistan. The photos presented Afghan women in burqas as oppressed, suggesting that the US needed to intervene to save them. The burqa becomes the signifier of women's oppression and international conflict.

Western perceptions of Muslim women and veiling practices are often towards Islamic countries and Muslim culture. Veiling has always been linked to cultural practices, which has hindered our understandings of women's rights. Scholar of women's studies and Near East studies Leila Ahmed argues, "the assumption that the issues of culture and women are connected . . . has trapped the struggle for women's rights with struggles over culture" (Ahmed 167). As a result, engaging in this imperialist logic has five political implications. First, it denies women agency. Second, it essentializes veiled Muslim women as victims. Third, it masks the root cause of violence. Fourth, it justifies and perpetuates violence of women's bodies. Finally, it encourages linking humanitarian discourse with warfare in order to advance US interests. In what follows, I will address these five political implications of imperialist logic.

First, the use of protection discourses "used by politicians and media alike...denied women any agency in the decision-making processes" (Stabile and Kumar 770). Protection discourse denies women's agency, masks the root cause of violence done to women, and it makes the violence against women worse. For example, in 2001 Bush drew a rhetorical link between the burqa and women's oppression and then harnessed that linkage as one of many justifications for invading. The US acted in their own self-interest and justified invading another country by framing women as helpless, as individuals who needed the US to help them. Scholars of media studies and Middle Eastern studies Carol

A. Stabile and Deepa Kumar argue, “As long as women are not permitted to speak for themselves, they provide the perfect grounds for an elaborate ventriloquist act, in which they serve as the passive vehicle for the representation of US interests” (778). As Stabile and Kumar point out, this logic is problematic because it assumes that the US is the ultimate authority that knows what is best for women. In reality, women know what is best for their own bodies and do not need the US to function as their oppressive advocate.

By speaking for veiled Muslim women, the US silences their voices. Scholar of legal discourse Ratna Kapur argues, “the representation of the Third World women . . . recreates the imperialist move that views the native subject as different and civilizationally backward” (11-12.). This notion is problematic because it assumes that women can never have agency and creates a lens in which Third World women are always seen as “disempowered, brutalized, and victimized” (Kapur 11-12). Feminist scholar Adhis Chetty argues, “the dominant image that women . . . lack the ability to rebel, resist and shape their own history persists . . . and [is] reflective of a discourse of silent, agentless women suspended in a historical, social and economic vacuum” (39). By framing women as victims as unable to speak for themselves, the US renders veiled Muslim women agentless and essentializes their experiences because the hero-victim frame creates the victim as “a subject that cannot accommodate a multi-layered experience” (Kapur 12). Framing women as victims prevents understanding their experiences as anything other than victims, including as women who have agency.

In addition, essentializing veiling practices is problematic because there is no single understanding for the symbolic representation of all veiling practices. For example,

the hijab functions as a political emblem and has multiple symbolic meanings such as submission, domination, terror, expression of agency, sign of victimization, instrument of warfare, and religion which means segregation of women (Cichocki; El Guindi, *Veil* 172; Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes” 209).

Essentializing veiled Muslim women as victims who need saving not only prevents women from being agents, but also perpetuates colonial feminism. Ahmed describes colonial feminism as feminism being “used against other cultures in the service of colonialism” (151). Colonial feminism materializes because it is “easily substantiated by reference to the conduct and rhetoric of the colonizers” (Ahmed 152). This is where Western influence co-opts and redeploys other cultures’ understandings of feminism and frames women in other countries, such as Afghanistan, as victims (Ayotte and Husain Cloud; Stabile and Kumar).

Linking women’s oppression with the burqa “under the rubric of ‘liberation’” not only denies women’s agency, but also masks “the root causes of structural violence in Afghanistan” (Ayotte and Husain 113). By linking women’s oppression with the burqa, Bush denied women agency by arguing that veiling practices were the cause of cultural, political, and structural issues of women’s oppression. The implication of such reductionistic logic is that it ignores root causes of violence that women in Afghanistan face such as violence from poppy eradication, poverty, and ethnic differences. In the end, reducing women’s oppression to veiling practices does not “liberate” women. Rather, it makes the oppression women face in Northern Africa and Western Asia worse because they are reduced to being viewed solely as women who are oppressed. My argument is

not that oppression is acceptable or tolerable. However, the way in which oppression is fought should not be at the expense of denying women agency. Therefore, the way in which violence is framed should always be interrogated.

Imperialist discourse justifies and perpetuates violence against women's bodies in the sense that women's bodies "are presented as battlegrounds in which the theatre of war...is played out" (Chetty 38). The concern is that rhetoric of women's bodies as needing protection resonates as a rationale for warfare or invading a country. For example, communication scholar Gordon Stables, citing political science scholar Mary E. Stuckey, argues, "Kosovo demonstrates that representations of gendered violence, as part of broader humanitarian rubric, possess greater saliency than other nascent post-cold war rhetorical hybrids" (107). Such framing is problematic because it utilizes humanitarian discourse in order to advance US security and economic interests.

We may want to consider the implications of utilizing imperialist discourse justifying as invading a country by framing a population as helpless. The premise for US warfare is saving and protecting an otherized population, particularly women, from "the predatory advances of some real or imaginary enemy" (Stabile and Kumar 770). Such imperialist discourse perpetuates the idea that white men need to and should save "brown women from brown men" (Spivak 296).

### The Hijab

This section only reviews literature on the hijab because there are many different types of veiling practices such as, "*burqu*", "*abayah*", "*tarhah*", "*burnus*", "*jilbab*", "*hayik*", "*milayah*", "*gallabiyyah*", "*dishdasha*", "*gargush*", "*gina*", "*mungub*", "*lithma*", "*yashmik*", "*habarah*,

*izer*” and hijab, for different cultures and groups of people (El Guindi 7). Each type of veiling practice is different and should not be lumped into one monolithic, essentialist, and ambiguous understanding of “the veil” (El Guindi 7).

The hijab tends to be worn by Muslim women, though men can wear the hijab to cover the neck and hair while revealing the face. Scholar Mona Almunajjed argues that “hijab” means to make invisible by using a shield or is a shield. In terms of religion, the Qur’an never explicitly states that the hijab must be worn; however, the Qur’an does state that women and men should engage in veiling practices in order to emphasize modesty (El Guindi, “Gendered Resistance” 57). Islam should not be thought of as the only religion that argues for individuals to engage in veiling practices. For example, veiling practices have been part of Christianity. Communication scholars Victoria Pruin DeFrancisco and Catherine Helen Palczewski argue “most images of the Virgin Mary show her wearing a headscarf much like a *hijab*, and Catholic women were required to wear head coverings to church until the 1960s” (230). The Western perspective coupled with imperialist logic has perpetuated an image of Islam being the only religion that advises individuals to engage in veiling practices. This assumption simply is not true.

The hijab has multiple symbolic meanings such as being a symbol of religion, modesty, privacy, and social protest. Scholar Sherifa Zuhur argues nine reasons women wear the hijab: religious, psychological, political, revolutionary, economic, cultural, demographic, practical, and domestic (105). Zuhur identifies these nine reasons because she conducted surveys among veiled Muslim women in Egypt, Kuwait, Oman, Jordan, and the US and found common themes among their responses. Communication scholar

Stephen M. Croucher argues that religious organizations in France believe the hijab symbolizes religion, hatred, fear, and anti-Muslim sentiment. Religious organizations in France are not the first to make such an argument about the hijab. This demonstrates multiple understandings of the hijab depending on the terministic screens being utilized. It also demonstrates that the West misreads all veiling practices as oppressing women.

However, veiling, in particular the hijab, provides space for resistance and emancipation (DeFrancisco and Palczewski 230). Women may wear hijabs to protest and resist governmental oppression and repression, providing women a way to engage in politics (Abu-Lughod, “Feminist Longings”; “The Muslim Woman”; Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution; Women and Gender*; Ayotte and Husain; Bier; El Guindi, “Confronting hegemony”; “Gendered Resistance”; *Veil*; “Veiling Infitah”; “Veiling Resistance”; Hegde; Keddie, *Women in Middle Eastern History; Women in the Middle East Past and Present*; Mahmood; Scott). Ahmed explains that women may use veiling practices to resist imperialist logic,

The veil came to symbolize in the resistance narrative, not the inferiority of the culture and the need to cast aside its customs in favor of those of the West, but, on the contrary, the dignity and validity of all native customs, and in particular those customs coming under fiercer colonial attack – the customs relating to women – and the need to tenaciously affirm them as a means of resistance to Western domination. (*Women and Gender* 164)

Veiling began to be worn politically in the 19<sup>th</sup> century “when European powers justified the colonial project by claiming to rescue Muslim women from the oppression of savage, faith, most readily visible in the practices of veiling and seclusion” (Cichoki 51). For example, in the 1970s Iranian regime leader Shah Reza Pahlavi, who was put into power

by the US, “promoted an image of the Westernized (and of course unveiled) woman that reduced her to a mindless decoration piece” (Cichoki 51). DeFrancisco and Palczewski argue, “at the same time that colonial powers were seeking to save Muslim women, no one was calling for the rescue of Catholic nuns, who also wore veils (in the form of the habit) and lived in the seclusion of their convents” (231). As Western, colonial nations began to invade countries in order to advance self-interests, women began to use veiling practices as a form of protest (DeFrancisco and Palczewski 231). Western nations that invaded countries would adopt policies that required women to no longer wear veils. As a result, women would not comply with such policies and in an act of protest, continued to engage in veiling practices. Women continue to use veiling practices to resist laws that attempt to discipline them. For example, French Muslim women wear their hijabs as a form of social protest against the French law banning the wearing of religious symbols in French public schools (Croucher).

This chapter is important because it provides insight into understanding the arguments presented in the photo. The photo challenges imperialist assumptions of veiled Muslim women by displaying a body that is in direct confrontation to the state, similar to the iconic “Tank Man” photo. In addition, this chapter is important because it discusses the current imperialistic logic, marginalizes those deemed Other, that guides US foreign policy and our daily lives.

Rather than engage in imperialistic logic that marginalizes individuals based on difference, instead, a spectator should commit to the civil contract of photography. Through the civil contract, a spectator realizes that imperialistic logic is flawed. By

watching the events in the snapshot, a spectator begins to see that imperialistic logic has a history of linking veiling to cultural practices, denies women agency, essentializes veiled Muslim women as victims, masks the root cause of violence, justifies and perpetuates violence of women's bodies, and links humanitarian discourse with warfare in order to advance self interest. Watching these realizations of imperialist logic unfold, a spectator begins to share the struggles of the photographed and acts upon the emergency claim abandoning imperialist logic within foreign policy and our daily lives.

This chapter assists in understanding the analysis chapter of how a photo challenges a history of imperialist logic. This chapter has argued that as a result of imperialistic logic, veiled Muslim women are depicted as being oppressed. This logic is problematic because it justifies and perpetuates violence done to women's bodies. It is through the civil contract of photography that veiling practices, in particular the hijab, can challenge dominant Western assumptions.



## CHAPTER 5

### A VISUAL READ

In this chapter, I analyze the photo of an unknown woman that circulates and recirculates primarily in the West. Using *TinEye*, a reverse image search engine, I found that 86 circulations and 22 recirculations of the photo were primarily in the United States. US graphic artist Nick Bygon created one of the recirculations, which primarily appeared on US blogs. The photo achieved this level of circulation in the US because it is consistent with, and therefore legible within the symbolic language, of the liberal democratic order. Similar to “Migrant Mother” and “Tank Man”, the photo is evidence of a historical event that displays the lone individual who represents democratic ideals of overcoming struggle. The photo is important because: 1) it represents veiled Muslim women as agents and 2) it demonstrates the way in which a photo can call on spectators to become active global citizens and transform their lens of looking at a photo into political acts.

I analyze the underlying social context and visual rhetorical strategies of the photograph of a veiled woman protesting in Tahrir Square. I make use of the heuristic vocabulary of body rhetoric, visual ideograph, the spectator gaze, and photographic citizenship. Using the heuristic vocabulary I make two distinct arguments: First, the woman is rendered invisible by the state and therefore the photo challenges the state’s authority through body rhetoric, Manichean symbolism, and <“V” for Victory> because the photo represents veiled Muslim women as agents. I argue, even from a perspective of looking, that the photo of a protesting Egyptian woman challenges: 1) dominant Western

assumptions that veiled women are oppressed and in need of a savior and 2) assumptions that Egyptian women are not agents of political change. Through visual rhetoric, in particular the photo's display of body rhetoric and visual ideograph of <"V" for Victory>, the photo constitutes veiled Muslim women as agents of political change against oppression and repression from Egypt and the US.

Second I argue, utilizing Azoulay's theory of photography as a civil contract, that the liberal democratic lens through which Westerners view the photo is limited and should be abandoned (14). Instead of looking at a photo, one should watch and bear witness to the events documented in the snapshot. By watching, a spectator no longer looks through the lens of liberal democratic citizenship, but through one of a civil contract.

One should abandon liberal-democratic citizenship and embrace Azoulay's notions of citizenship as the civil contract of photography. A spectator should not stop short of interacting with a photo by just looking at it. In this sense, I argue that a spectator can use both strategies of looking and watching a photo. However, ultimately a spectator should realize that the lens of watching is a better form of citizenship than the lens of looking.

In this analysis chapter, I provide two perspectives of the photo through looking and watching. What follows are three sections titled: "Looking from a Liberal Democratic Perspective," "A Different User's Manual: Watching from a Transformed Citizenship Perspective," and "Implication of Visual Strategies." Within the first section

are two subsections titled: “Good Versus Evil: The Photo’s Use of Manichean Symbolism” and “<“V” for Victory>.

### Looking from a Liberal Democratic Perspective

What follows is an analysis of how the photo engages the Western liberal democratic lens while also challenging the Western liberal democratic lens through the photographed woman’s beauty, hijab, clothing, eye contact, open mouth, hand gesture, and body argument. This first section argues that the photo is important because, through its complexity, it represents the possibility of rupturing Western patterns of looking.

One characteristic I quickly noticed in the photo is the woman’s beauty. The woman has large dark eyes, fair skin, full lips, and a small nose, which are characteristics that the West deems beautiful. For example, Medical doctor Viren Swami argues that, “for women, things like large eyes, a small nose and fuller lips are generally found to be more attractive since they are considered to enhance facial femininity” (par. 5). What is interesting about this photo is that a spectator can see the woman’s face and can quickly notice her beauty. The woman’s beauty is important because it makes a spectator want to keep looking at her. If the woman did not “fit” the Western characteristics of beauty such as dark eyes, fair skin, full lips, and small nose then a spectator would not continue to gaze at the photo to figure out what was going on within the space of the photo. While the woman’s beauty “fits” Western standards of beauty, her hijab does not, which is interesting because the presence of the hijab adds complexity to a spectator’s understanding of the photo.

The photographed woman is wearing a hijab that covers her hair and is a solid

color, brown with an orange lining, which demonstrates her religious affiliation to Islam. She may be wearing some makeup. For a Western spectator the woman's hijab makes her "exotic," a forbidden woman, and a distant Other. For example, scholars have noted that veiled Muslim women are often seen as exotic (Ayotte and Husain; Chichoki; Stabile and Kumar). Since the nineteenth century the West has primarily viewed veiled Muslim women as exotic beings because they are seen as the secluded untouchable distant Other (Hasib, par. 2). The woman in the photo is seen as exotic because the woman's hijab is a marker of difference that deviates from Western normalized dress. As a result of her "exoticness," a Western spectator continues to gaze at the photo.

What is interesting about the photo is that a Western spectator sees the woman as exotic but not hypersexual, which is different from many visual colonial representations that depict veiled Muslim women as exotic and hypersexual. For example, Jasmine Zine argues that imperialist discourse not only exoticizes veiled Muslim women, but also hypersexualizes them (110-116). In addition, feminist scholar Laila Hasib argues that, "the fantasy created by western man of the Middle Eastern woman is one of a forbidden world of women, of sexuality caged and inaccessible to him, surrounded by the barriers of the veil and seclusion" (par. 3). While other photos that circulate in the West depict veiled Muslim women as sexualized beings available to men, or as subordinated women in need of saving, the photo of the woman does neither.

The woman's non-verbal body communication, such as her clothing, eye contact, open mouth, and hand gesture, make it so that the woman is seen as an agent rather than a sexualized subject. Psychiatry scholars Gretchen N. Foley and Julie P. Gentile argue that,

“nonverbal cues cannot be interpreted within a vacuum” because context is important to understanding nonverbal cues (38). In addition, no single nonverbal gesture should be solely analyzed because “it is more useful to accurately interpret several behaviors that occur simultaneously” (Foley and Gentile 43). Thus, what follows is an analysis of the woman’s non-verbal communication.

The photographed woman is covered, yet her clothing is fitted, making her body outline visible. Her shirt is orange. This demonstrates a continually changing dress for Muslim women. This is important because it indicates that Egypt has had a complex history regarding dress. It is also important because the photographed woman’s clothing alters a Western spectator’s view from seeing her as oppressed and instead seeing her as an agent.

The photo also displays the photographed woman’s gaze, which is breathtaking. She is directing her eye contact, through the officers, at the spectator and has powerful facial expressions. The woman is not directing her eye contact at the photographer. Whether she intended for the photographer to see her is irrelevant. What matters more is how the Western spectator interacts with the photo and the protestor within it. A spectator’s eye is drawn to the focal point of the image, the woman.

The woman’s eye contact is interesting because the photographed woman is in the East, or coded as being Eastern, where eye contact may be seen as an act of aggression or disrespect. In particular, Islamic practices and religious rules prohibit eye contact between women and men in order to ensure piety. In contrast, eye contact in the West is a necessity. In terms of verbal persuasion, when a Western speaker has direct eye contact

with the audience the speaker is perceived to be more credible than a speaker who does not engage in direct eye contact (Beebe 21). If one does not engage in direct eye contact with an audience then the individual is considered to be rude, uncomfortable, or defensive (Goman, par. 4). Forbes contributor on body language and nonverbal communication Carol Kinsey Goman argues that, “in the Western world, too little eye contact is interpreted as being impolite, insincere, or even dishonest” (par. 8). In the West eye contact is important to avoid negative perceptions. Those who engage in eye contact are often perceived to be powerful, sincere, and confident.

The woman engages in direct eye contact with a Western spectator. As a result, a Western spectator sees the woman as being powerful, confident, and sincere. The photographed woman’s direct and forceful gaze draws a Western spectator. The photo is interesting because it challenges Western liberal democratic notions of veiled Muslim women as being submissive, which is based on the photographed woman’s hijab as a marker of difference that deems the woman as exotic and a distant Other. For a Western spectator, an individual who does not engage in eye contact is uncomfortable or submissive. The photographed veiled woman’s direct eye contact matters because it challenges such Western notions.

The photo also challenges Western understandings of Muslim women as being submissive through the photographed woman’s display of anger. Within the image the woman is off-centered, but she still draws the spectator in with her forceful, angry gaze and her facial expression of anger. The photographed woman’s display of an open mouth is high arousal expression, which is associated with anger. Psychology scholars Sherri C.

Widen and Pamela Naab argue that open mouth expressions are perceived as having higher arousal than closed mouth expressions (2). The distinction between these two matters because high arousal expressions are associated with anger while low arousal expressions are associated with sadness (Widen and Naab 6). High arousal expression is the response a spectator has to the photograph in coming to the conclusion that the woman is angry.

A Western spectator, through a liberal democratic lens, often sees veiled Muslim women as passive. The photo's display of anger matters because it challenges such Western notions. Using a liberal democratic lens to see photos of veiled Muslim women, a Western spectator sees less emotion than anger or no emotion at all. For example, the 2001 *Time Magazine* and *Time.com* photos display women in burqas that covered their faces. With such covering a Western spectator could not interpret the facial non-verbal communication and emotion of the veiled bodies. Rather, a Western spectator based their understanding of veiled Muslim women as oppressed on the basis on Western media framing and not on how the photos display facial expressions. In contrast to the 2001 *Time Magazine* and *Time.com* photos, the photo challenges Western notions of veiled Muslim women as submissive by displaying facial expressions, which allows for a Western spectator to see something that was not present before -- that veiled Muslim women have agency.

The photo also challenges the liberal democratic lens through the display of the hand gesture. The photographed woman displays a "V" sign with her index and middle finger of her right hand. The woman's displays an assertive hand gesture. Social

scientists Daniel Casasanto and Kyle Jasmin argue that hand gestures are important for verbal persuasion. For example, a handshake may mean a friendly hello or an agreement between two parties. In the instance of the photo the display of the visual ideograph <“V” for Victory> establishes a relationship with the spectator based on context. This relationship is further explored later in this chapter where I provide an analysis and the political implication of the visual ideograph <“V” for Victory>.

Even though the non-verbal strategies may stop a Western spectator from seeing the woman as a hyper-sexual being, it does not stop a spectator from noticing her beauty and deeming her exotic. A Western spectator gazing at the woman because of her beauty is problematic because it results in the woman being seen through a gaze that otherizes her. A spectator’s gaze otherizes her because while the woman’s beauty “fits” Western norms of attractiveness but her hijab does not. For a Western spectator the presence of the hijab is a representation of the Third World, which is a spectacle for the Western gaze.

Chapter 3 discusses the history of how Egyptian women have been visible in historical protests. Chapter 3 also notes that while Egyptian women have historically played an instrumental role in Egyptian politics they have also have continually been pushed to the side lines. For example, during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution women were instrumental for mobilization efforts while women were also vulnerable to the state. Egyptian women were vulnerable to the state that had a lack of policies supporting women’s rights and equality, which is demonstrated through women’s lack of literacy, low representation in politics, and vulnerability to sexual harassment. These are three examples how Egyptian women are rendered invisible and powerless by the Mubarak



regime. These examples provide evidence that the photo is interesting because the photo displays a woman who makes herself visible against the state's injustices.

Within the photo, the woman's vulnerability to the state is not just expressed through her facial expressions and gaze. Vulnerability can be seen through how she places her body at risk by standing in front of and in between male uniformed armed officers. Moreover, men surround the woman. Armed men are standing in front of her and unarmed men are walking behind her. In the distance, men are standing on a sidewalk. Some men in the distance are gazing in the direction of the woman. This can indicate that her voice is being heard, however it is up for debate on whether or not these men are actually listening to what she is articulating.

The woman's body is in front of Central Security Forces (CSF) officers who are an Egyptian paramilitary force. The CSF officers are identifiable by the patch on the officers' arms. Looking through other photos of CSF officers, I came to the conclusion that the individuals in the photo were part of the Egyptian paramilitary force. It is important to distinguish the CSF officers from Egyptian police officers because CSF officers are often thought of as being violent when they are not. For example, during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution it was Egyptian police officers who were violent towards protestors and not CSF officers. In fact, one of the reasons for protesting was police brutality that was condoned by the Mubarak regime for over 30 years. The protest of police brutality is even evident in the date of the protest, January 25, a national Egyptian holiday known as Police Day (Mackey, par. 1).

The CSF assists the Egyptian National Police with governmental security, foreign embassies, and riots. During the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, CSF officers would form a line in order to discipline or block protestors. In the photo, two officers represent a riot line that attempts to discipline or block the woman from having her voice heard. Riot officers form a long line, standing side-by-side, shoulder-to-shoulder, creating a barricade that attempts to prevent protestors from accessing a particular space, either behind or in front of the CSF officers. If protestors are close to the CSF, in order to distance themselves from them, the officers may use violence in the form of using their batons, tear gas, pepper spray, stun grenades and rubber bullets. The CSF officers are wearing neo-medieval body armor and a large, protective helmet that encases their neck and head. The CSF officers are armed and ready to aggressively attack protestors on the street. CSF officers have the capacity to be violent in an attempt to discipline non-violent protestors. The woman's body is at risk given that the CSF officers represent the violent state that subjugates women's rights and keeps the woman from the rest of the world.

Symbolically, the CSF officers are disciplining the woman from interacting with the rest of the world, in particular the West, which can only be accessed through the photographer who takes a snapshot, a photograph, of the event. The CSF officers symbolically blocking the woman from interacting with the West is important because the officers can be seen as aggressors given that they are in uniform and riot gear. The main duty of the CSF officers when a riot erupts was to maintain peace. However, as CSF officers attempt to maintain peace, they further violence and perhaps make it worse when they discipline protestors.

In the photo, the photographed woman uses body argument to perform Egyptian opposition to the regime in Tahrir Square, the “Liberation” Square, most profoundly in her gestures directly in front of uniformed, armed, CSF officers, who are standing directly in front of her, creating a barricade, representing the power, control, and violence of the state. In this image, Tahrir Square represents violence by displaying CSF officers who are trained to discipline protestors through any means necessary. This is a reoccurring, global theme where a line of riot police forms in order to discipline protestors. Through such discipline tactics, the riot police symbolize the power of the state. The violence in Tahrir Square between protestors and CSF officers in Tahrir Square represents a civil war between the people (dissenters) and CSF officers (the state.)

The woman represents the individualistic, liberal democratic order by functioning as the text’s hero. In the individualistic, liberal democratic order, a hero is different from, yet similar to, a larger population. A hero is different from the larger population because the individual has to have done something that makes her or him an exceptional or extraordinary individual. However, the hero is a normal, everyday person who just happens to do something exceptional or extraordinary in a moment. In order to be deemed a hero, one must be an everyday person who has done something brave, perhaps risking her or his life, for others (Hariman and Lucaites 81-127).

Similar to “Tank Man” the body argument present in the photo represents liberal democracy because it demands fundamental values such as equality, justice, and self-determination of citizens through democratic dissent. The body argument in the photo not only embodies these core liberal democratic values, but also functions as a model for

those who seek visibility and justice through civic participation of non-violent protest. In addition, the photographed woman's body argument, similar to "Tank Man," displays symbolic power such as her representation of Egyptian national identity, citizenship, and the value of the individual person (Hariman and Lucaites 217). Through this symbolic power the photographed woman represents Egypt's potential future as a democratic liberal society.

The image of the body at risk is encapsulated in arguments that simultaneously challenge the state and also challenge Western imperialism. By arguing against the state's control and manipulation, the photo demands democracy and displays a woman who wants her voice heard. At the same time, the photo challenges the idea that veiled Muslim women - in particular Egyptian women - are helpless victims who need the US to save them from oppression. The unknown woman's body directly acts to counter dominant notions of Muslim women as facing oppression and being in need of a savior by positioning herself as a powerful agent who challenges dominant assumptions about Muslim women who engage in veiling practices. The photo highlights veiled Muslim women as agents of change - beings who are capable of demonstrating against the state(s), in this instance the Mubarak regime and the US.

What is interesting about the photo is that the body displayed in the photo is different from the bodies of Afghan women displayed in *Time* magazine and on their website in 2001 analyzed by Cloud which I have described earlier. Unlike images of women wearing a burqa classifying them as the Other, in the 2011 image from Tahrir Square the protesting woman is wearing a hijab and showing her face. She is standing in

front of armed officers, risking her body, and is wearing Western styled clothing, rather than a burqa. This is important because the display of the woman's face is less threatening and more in line with Western appearance than a burqa that covers one's entire body. In this sense, the woman is otherized but to a lesser degree than the otherization that women's bodies wearing the burqa are subject to.

With these differences, the photo argues that a veiled Muslim woman has her own agency to protest against the state. However, by identifying the woman as a Muslim woman, the photo is able to simultaneously identify with veiled Muslim women throughout the world because the photographed is otherized and deemed as being different. When the spectator's otherizing lens of the photographed is challenged, it can alter a spectator's perception of all veiled Muslim women. The photograph argues that Muslim women have agency thereby providing a visual counter to imperialist discourse and is able to challenge the notion that all veiled Muslim women are oppressed, helpless, and need the West to act as their hero or savior. Through the display of a gendered body, the photo challenges dominant Western understandings of Muslim women. The photo makes present what has been made invisible - that Muslim women have agency and do not need the West to act as a savior.

The photo engages the Western liberal democratic lens through the photographed woman's beauty, hijab, clothing, eye contact, open mouth, hand gesture, and body argument. While the photo engages the Western liberal democratic lens, the photo is important because it represents the possibility of rupturing Western patterns of looking which occurs in the photo's complexity. The photographic strategies re-entrench the

Western liberal democratic lens while also challenging it. Therefore, the photo functions as a space for critical analysis because it challenges Western representations and assumptions of veiled Muslim women. What follows are two subsections where I analyze the photo's use of Manichean symbolism and "<V> for Victory" as being consistent with the liberal-democratic lens while also providing space for critical analysis.

#### Good Versus Evil: The Photo's Use of Manichean Symbolism

In this first subsection I argue that the photo's use of Manichean symbolism engages the Western liberal democratic lens while also challenging it. By re-entrenching the liberal democratic lens the photo provides a space for critical analysis. In addition, Manichean symbolism is important because it represents the dichotomy between liberal democracy and authoritarianism where liberal democracy tends to be associated with good while authoritarianism is associated with evil. This dichotomy also reflects Manichean symbolism where liberal democracy, the force of good, represents light and authoritarianism, the force of evil, represents darkness. I begin by explaining the use of light and darkness and then provide analysis of how the photo challenges the Western liberal democratic lens.

The focal point of the photo is the woman. Light highlights her and directs where the viewer's eye first glances, in contrast to the darkness of the officers. The background of the photo does not have a sharp focus, which keeps the focus on the foreground of the subject. Within the left and right sides of the photo are the backs of uniformed guards blocking the foreground of the image. Enough is shown of one officer to know that a line of armed officers stand in front of the unknown woman. Framed within the center of the

image, the woman stands within natural sunlight. There is a strong contrast between the black uniforms of the officers and the bright lighting and clothing of the woman. The woman is standing between and in front of the two officers.

The photo not only challenges Western assumptions of veiled Muslim women through the body on display, but also through the lightness and darkness of the photo. Manichean symbolism is present within the image. Lightness, in contrast to darkness, shows that the woman shines through and become a victor. The lighting creates a binary opposition between the unknown woman and the armed officers. Through such lighting, the binary opposition construction of good and evil becomes a moral clash that a spectator has to negotiate. The photo is interesting because in Western understandings, the woman is seen as “backwards” yet she breaks Western stereotypical norms. At the same time, the lighting constructs the CSF officers as villainous.

The binary, through lighting, creates the Self and Other (Cloud 285). The woman’s face is visible and that light shines on her, constructs her as the Self. In contrast, the CSF officers are faceless and are constructed as antagonists through their dark military-style outfits. Most spectators would not want to associate with the antagonists who could be perceived as evil. Rhetorically, evil is something to dismiss, get rid of, and fear. By associating the CSF officers as violent and evil, a spectator finds they are rooting for the woman. She is “good” and is in contrast to the CSF officers, who are evil, and represent the oppressive state. What is interesting is that the photo represents the woman as the Self. Through lighting, the spectator establishes a relationship with the woman because in the clash of good and evil, she represents good as a veiled, Muslim woman.

This is interesting because it is different from how women in the *Time.com* and *Time* photographs are constructed as the Other. Rather than viewing her as the Other, a spectator relates to the woman because she functions as a hero. At the same time, the antagonistic role of the CSF officers not only codes them as evil, but also depersonalizes them into pawns of the state.

Through the binary of lightness and darkness, good and evil, the woman represents the individualistic, liberal democratic order by functioning as the text's hero. The photo represents the struggle of the liberal democratic order because the woman functions as a hero who is in direct opposition to the violent, evil CSF officers -- the state. Similar to "Tank Man," the woman's body is in direct confrontation to the CSF officers, the state. In addition, the photo represents and becomes evidence of the events that unfolded in Tahrir Square, which becomes a historical record, of the lone individual against the armed state. By placing her body at risk, the woman becomes a trope that represents Egyptians and veiled Muslim women. Hariman and Lucaites argue that "the individuated aggregate exemplifies the magnitude appropriate to collective identity while maintaining a basis for individualized identification suitable to a liberal-democratic society" (91). The photo becomes a celebration of individualism because it is the lone individual who risks her body to protest against the state and by doing so appropriates collective identity of Egyptians and veiled Muslim women.

In this sense, the photo represents the woman as a hero because she challenges the state and places her body at risk. At the same time, the CSF officers are villains, who confront the woman, making them the villains. The construction of binary oppositions



that the photo displays constitutes the protestor as a response to international discussions of the West's involvement in Egyptian politics. If the lighting of the photo was altered and the woman was in the dark, the woman may be signified as "uncivilized" and echo colonialist rhetoric. The metaphorical darkness of the woman would signify her as needing to be saved from oppressive, Muslim men. Light upon Egyptian military personnel would signify the Mubarak regime as being a hero, savior, for the oppressed, veiled Muslim woman. The depiction of the Mubarak regime as a hero may provide the US justification to support the Mubarak regime as enemies of oppression.

The photo engages the Western liberal democratic lens through the use of Manichean symbolism. The photo is important because it represents the possibility of rupturing Western patterns of looking by challenging the liberal democratic lens. What follows is the second subsection in the photo's use of "<V> for Victory" as being consistent with the liberal democratic lens while challenging it.

#### <V> for Victory

In this second subsection I argue that the photo's use of "<V> for Victory" engages the Western liberal democratic lens while also challenging it. The photo re-entrenches the liberal democratic lens while also providing a space for critical inquiry. In addition, "<V> for Victory" is important because it embodies liberal democratic values of freedom and justice. I begin by explaining the widespread use of "<V> for Victory" in Egypt, its historical reference, and the political implications of the visual ideograph.

The photo challenges the Western imperialistic relations with the Mubarak regime through body rhetoric, in particular use of "<V> for Victory". The hand gesture displayed

by the woman is a “V” sign with her index and middle finger of her right hand. The “V” can have multiple meanings such as being a symbol for peace, an offensive gesture, or a gesture for victory. In Egypt, Egyptians use the “V” symbol to signify that they will overcome oppression by the Mubarak regime and the US’s complicity in the regime’s violence. Egyptians unified together around the common understanding of the “V” symbol. <“V” for Victory> became symbolic and political during the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, where Egyptians demonstrated against the 30-year dictatorial Mubarak regime. By displaying the “V” for Victory symbol, each protestor repeats his or her understanding that he or she part of a collective group that cannot wait until the Mubarak regime and US influence in Egyptian politics falls. <“V” for Victory> not only spread in Tahrir Square, but throughout all of Egypt, unifying a country of ordinary people against the state (Zelinsky, par. 1-11).

The “V” symbol has traditionally been used as a rallying point for Western leaders to mobilize justifications for invasions of countries against oppression. Western leaders have used the “V” for Victory symbol to rally citizens against a common enemy. For example, during World War II Winston Churchill used the “V” for Victory symbol to signify that democracy would prevail and be victorious over the Nazis.

The 2011 Tahrir Square photo enacts <“V” for Victory> as a symbol that is a visual reference point for its argument. The visual ideograph has multiple connotations for a variety of contexts (Edwards and Winkler 290). <“V” for Victory> functions symbolically to represent arguments. For example, the appropriation of the symbol in

Egypt represents Egyptians challenging oppression in hopes of achieving a democracy of their own, not a puppet regime that serves US interests. Through this appropriation <“V” for Victory> functions as a visual ideograph because it constructs a political and ideological reality. The “V” for Victory symbol is elevated to a cultural status and embodies cultural ideas for Egyptians. The cultural status of <“V” for Victory> is to challenge the Western imperialistic logic and Mubarak regime’s oppression. Through such use, the ideograph has created a new perception of its original meaning.

The display of <“V” for Victory> in the photo signifies democratic ideals of protest and resistance. Huffington Post blogger Nathaniel Zelinsky argues that while historically there have been multiple meanings of <“V” for Victory>, it has never been stripped “of its core connotation of ethical opposition” (par. 7). For example, protestors during the 2009 Iranian election displayed <“V” for Victory> “in the name of an ideal, expressing their emotions and principles with this timeless signal” (Zelinsky par. 8). Similar to Iranian protestors Egyptian protestors displayed <“V” for Victory> embracing “a rich liberal tradition” (Zelinsky, par. 9). By appropriating and displaying <“V” for Victory>, Egyptians argue, through protest, that they have a right to access and be guided by the very principles and values that the US was founded upon.

In Egypt, the “V,” a visual ideograph in many photos during the protests, highlights the importance that symbols play and how symbols can be appropriated. The woman and the Egyptian people appropriate the symbol as a rallying point for liberation. The symbol has been used by democratic countries that hope to become victorious over tyranny, oppression, and aggression. <“V” for Victory> demonstrates that Egyptians have

internalized Western norms and embraced a liberal, visual ideograph. The <“V” for Victory> also demonstrates that Egyptian culture and politics has been permeated by Western influence. By appropriating and using <“V” for Victory>, Egyptians challenge their oppressors, the US and Mubarak regime. Asserting a “V,” through her out stretched arm, and commanding attention with her eyes, the woman performs her agency by challenging the US’s imperialistic logic and the Mubarak regime’s oppression.

<“V” for Victory> functions as a response to the <clash of civilizations> and <white man’s burden> ideographs reinforced by *Time.com* and *Time* magazine’s visual representations of Afghan women (Cloud 290). The <clash of civilizations> and <white man’s burden> ideographs function to create the Self and Other by distinguishing US selves as different from Afghan women, the Other. These demarcating, ideological differences served to divide the Self from the Other, while simultaneously unifying the Self. The Self is unified around a common enemy, the Other. In contrast to <clash of civilizations> and <white man’s burden>, <“V” for Victory> functions to unify Egyptians against the state and critiques the construction of the Self and Other by uniting citizens against tyranny, oppression, and aggression.

I have argued that the photo challenges the state’s authority through body rhetoric, Manichean symbolism, and <“V” for Victory>. Even though the photo participates and re-entrenches the liberal democratic lens, it also challenges the liberal democratic lens providing space for critical inquiry regarding representations and Western assumptions of veiled Muslim women. In the section that follows I present my second argument. I argue a spectator should shift their lens from looking at the photo to

watching to engage in shared citizenship. Through watching, a spectator can see and hear emergency claims presented in the photo, which causes the spectator to not only listen to the photo, but also talk back to it. Through such a political action a spectator becomes an active global citizen.

#### A Different User's Manual: Watching Photography as a Civil Contract

While I was conducting research to select a text to study, I saw the photo several times, skimming over the photo every time I came across it. I did this over the course of two months. However, for some reason, I kept coming back to this photo, but I couldn't understand why. Scrolling through more images of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, I continued my search for a text to investigate. I begin to find circulations and recirculations of this photo. This photo appears on websites more frequently than other photos of veiled Muslim women in groups. Intelligible to my liberal democratic lens, I believe this photo to be a good start to the beginning of this project.

As I continued to search for an artifact that intrigues me, I also began to research the history of Egyptian protests. I wanted to know what events led up to the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. By conducting this research, I began to shift my lens of looking at the photo, realizing I was too focused on looking at the photo from my liberal democratic lens and that I ignored entirely Azoulay's perspective of watching and interacting with a photo. By watching the snapshot, I can see the historical events, which are outlined in Chapter 3, which came before the snapshot. By critiquing the user's manual of liberal democratic citizenship and embracing a different manual of civil contract, I can no longer ignore the emergency claims, the "situation involving calamity or mortal peril that

demands immediate treatment,” I saw in the photo (Azoulay 197). At this time, I had no idea I was beginning to engage in Azoulay’s theoretical concept of civil contract.

As mentioned in Chapter 2 there are four obligations that must be met in order to accept the civil contract of photography. First, a spectator must no longer look at a photo, but watch. Second, the spectator must be positioned as watching the photo through shared citizenship. Third, the spectator must engage in a call to action of sharing an obligation to struggle for those who are photographed. Finally, in order for the civil contract of photography to function, the spectator must shift from becoming the addressee to becoming the addresser.

In meeting the first obligation of the civil contract of photography I shift my lens from looking to watching and by doing so start to watch the emergency claims, “an alert to a disastrous condition demanding urgent and immediate action,” present in the photo (Azoulay 25). The difference between looking and watching is that looking “suspends the gaze’s hold, demanding that the fleeting gesture of seeing, which disappears as soon as the object is identified” while watching “occurs over an extended duration” (Azoulay 305). In order to watch a photo I must fix my gaze “for a period of time in order to allow the visible to unfold, like a picture in motion” (Azoulay 305). Just like a movie, the photo remains within a frame as I fix my gaze within it. However, unlike a movie, I control my gaze and can come to watch the photo longer (Azoulay 305). By shifting my lens to watching I realize that the photo is speaking to me and I now see the woman’s struggle as being my struggle because I engage in a shared obligation to struggle with her and her

emergency claims of violence, silence, and vulnerability. In order to not just feel sympathetic for the photographed woman I knew I had to do more.

In meeting the second obligation of the civil contract of photography I position myself as a citizen in the citizenry of photography who enters a dialogue with the photo (Azoulay 122-123). By entering a dialogue with the photo I become a citizen who shows the photo and speaks about the photo to others and by doing so I “obtain the power to remind citizens that what brings them together, what motivates them to look at photographs, is the common interest” (Azoulay 123). I realize that the conversation is dialogic. What the 2011 Tahrir Square photo does is made meaningful through the relationship between me and the photographed, that has been constructed by the photographer, because I am now doing more than looking at the photo. Instead, I watch, interact and talk back to the photo. The photo is talking to me and I am talking back to the photo.

I develop this shared citizenship only through the space of the photo and it is within this space that I realize the photo is trying to say something. The relationship between me and the woman develops because the photo comes to life. By coming to life, the photo displays a woman who I see as an equal and not less than me. It is this mutual understanding of citizenship that the photo can make arguments because the photo calls on me to become an active global citizen. By being an active global citizen, I negotiate and transform my lens of looking at the photo into a political act against the emergency claims of violence, silence, and vulnerability.

As mentioned in Chapter 2 there are two distinct understandings of citizenship. Citizenship in the sense of the nation-state is not shared because “it provides a protective shield to those declared as citizens within a certain territory, and discriminates between them and others, noncitizens, who are governed with them, in the same territory, by the same power” (Azoulay 23). In contrast, shared citizenship manifests in the photo because photography “deteritorializes citizenship, for reaching beyond its conventional boundaries toward plotting out a political space in which the plurality of speech and action ... is actualized permanently by the eventual participation of all the governed” (Azoulay 23). If nation-state citizenship, such as the liberal democratic lens, is not abandoned to shared citizenship then “the citizen’s possible partnership with citizens of other nations or with noncitizens who, together, could stand up to the governmental power and confront it” will be foreclosed (Azoulay 32). In addition, without shared citizenship, nation-state citizens will continue to be privileged while noncitizens continue to face “forms of discriminatory mistreatment which breach international norms” (Azoulay 31). Only through shared citizenship can a spectator begin to overcome the nation-state’s distinction between citizen and noncitizen (Azoulay 74).

In meeting the third obligation of the civil contract of photography I engage in a call to action to struggle for those who are photographed. By engaging in a shared obligation to struggle I overcome notions of flawed citizenship. As mentioned in Chapter 2 flawed citizenship is my privilege as a spectator who “is removed from any calamity that threatens to affect them or any disaster that has already struck” (Azoulay 38). In order to overcome this flawed citizenship my first priority is civic responsibility of



struggling with those that struggle. I cannot engage in a shared citizenship while continuing to use my lens of empathy. Looking at the photo for the first time, I see the woman as a citizen of an oppressive regime. I have sympathy and compassion for her because I can see that she is struggling. My sympathy is problematic because I see the woman's pain as only her pain. My lens is in line with Susan Sontag's *Regarding the Pain of Others* which Azoulay critiques by arguing that such discussions "elide the gaze of the photographed subject, which can vary enormously between sharp, probing, passive, exhausted, furious, introverted, defensive, warning, aggressive, full of hatred, pleading, unbalanced, skeptical, cynical, indifferent, or demanding" (Azoulay 19). Feeling sympathetic for the photographed woman forecloses my responsibility of engaging in political action because the assumption is that the events in the photo are "already over and done" (Azoulay 19).

As Azoulay argues I, just like artistic discourse and postmodern theorists such as Roland Barthes and Susan Sontag, face "image fatigue" (Azoulay 11). My "image fatigue" results in me looking at the photo as a neutral spectator or photography critic. My liberal democratic lens prevents me from recognizing my responsibility to interact with the photo because I have reduced my role to being a passive addressee (Azoulay 122). By being a passive addressee and only feeling sympathy for the photographed woman I further the violence depicted in the photo because I am doing exactly what the state had done to her – I am pushing her to the sidelines. As a result, I must abandon my lens of empathy and replace it with my shared obligation to struggle with the photographed woman who presents an emergency claim within the photo.

The emergency claim in the photo is Egypt's political and civil life existing on the verge of catastrophe. Azoulay argues that "existing on the verge of catastrophe means being exposed at all times, with no relief, to injuries of all kinds" (Azoulay 269). The photo displays an emergency claim of the photographed who places her body at risk by standing between and in front of the two officers and by doing so, calls a spectator to take action against the oppression and suppression that Egyptians have faced by the Mubarak regime for over 30 years. Egyptians, in particular veiled Muslim women, are treated as noncitizens whose lives are treated as bare life, "life that ensures them the minimum for survival" (Azoulay 66). Noncitizens are seen as being temporary and on the "verge of tolerable living" (Azoulay 66). Egyptians have been on the "verge of tolerable living" with a lack of women's rights, government corruption, unemployment, low minimum wages, inflation of food prices, police brutality, suppression of free speech, nepotism, and the rigging of Egypt's national legislative elections (El-Taraboulsi 8). This emergency claim has been hidden because of how citizenship is determined by the nation-state and it is my responsibility to be part of shared citizenship and to take action against injustices.

The photo is a snapshot of the events taking place in Tahrir Square and of past experiences that led up to the photo. By experiencing the events in the photo, a spectator is able also experience the events that led up to the snapshot (Azoulay 19). A spectator experiences the events by gazing at the photo to "reconstruct the photographic situation, the encounter that took place "there" (Azoulay 161). Through the photo a spectator participates in the reconstruction of the photo, which allows the spectator to experience the emergency claims (Azoulay 123). Azoulay argues that photography enables the

photographed and “others who take part in the reconstruction of their civil grievances to exercise the legitimate violence of photography’s citizens, regardless of their status as noncitizens deprived of rights who cannot use their citizenship to negotiate with the sovereign power” (Azoulay 123). Chapters 1, 3, and 4 are my written reconstructions of the photo. The chapters indicate that veiled Muslim women risking their bodies as part of social protest has occurred in the past but was not present in Western public dialogue and that Western imperialist discourse often forecloses representations of veiled Muslim women as agents.

Political action requires that individuals, in particular privileged individuals, challenge the nation-state’s construction of the citizen and noncitizen to create a space where the boundaries of citizenship are “distinct from the nation and the market whose dual rationale constantly threatens to subjugate it” (Azoulay 22). It is not enough to simply raise money and send resources to Egypt because those whose lives are on the “verge of tolerable living” will continue to have only bare life. For example, in Palestine global citizens contribute to humanitarian organizations that “try to maintain life at a minimally tolerable level” (Azoulay 64). However, such political action maintains the hegemonic order because the “addresses of the assistance they offer still remain noncitizen” (Azoulay 64). It is important a privileged citizen who identifies “with the power that governs them” challenge the citizen/noncitizen structure because the noncitizen is often marginalized and excluded (Azoulay 22).

The photo addresses an addressee who is not present in Tahrir Square because the spectator is situated outside of the time and space of the photo. In meeting the fourth

obligation of the civil contract of photography, I, the spectator function as a moral addressee (Azoulay 339-341). Given that the photo functions as evidence of the events that unfolded in Tahrir Square, it makes sense that the photo addresses a spectator who is not present in Tahrir Square who develops a relationship with the photographed through the photo. Without the spectator, the photo may not exist because the photo would not do anything. It is only by watching the photo and recognizing the emergency claims present that I engage in a shared citizenship and develop a relationship with the woman. By interacting with the photo through shared citizenship, I realize that I am bearing witness to the photo's grievances with imperialist discourse and oppression by the Mubarak regime. By bearing witness, I treat the woman and the events unfolding in Tahrir Square with civic responsibility.

#### Implications of Visual Strategies

The visual strategies such as body rhetoric, visual ideograph, the spectator gaze, and photographic citizenship are a necessity for understanding how the photo constitutes Muslim women as political agents within the lens of liberal democratic citizenship. While the liberal democratic lens has been ingrained into the way Western spectators look at photos, this photo demonstrates that the liberal democratic lens, the wrong user's manual, can and must be abandoned. Azoulay argues that "the wrong users' manual hinders the spectator's understanding that the photograph – every photograph – belongs to no one, that she can become not only its addressee but also its addresser, one who can produce a meaning for it and disseminate this meaning further" (14). When a spectator embraces the

civil contract of photography and disseminates a photo's meaning they are engaging in political action (Azoulay 14).

Abandoning the liberal democratic lens and embracing the civil contract of photography is not easy. With my own difficulties in abandoning my liberal democratic lens, I understand that a spectator may constantly be drawn back to it. Even a section of this chapter has been dedicated to exploring and arguing about what the photo does from a liberal democratic perspective. Not only is abandoning one's liberal-democratic lens difficult, so is learning to watch a photo when the only perspective a spectator has understood and utilized is a liberal democratic lens. However, no matter how difficult, a spectator must abandon her or his liberal democratic lens. While it may be difficult to abandon, the shift from looking at the photo to watching and engaging the photo must occur because the photo is political and requests that citizens take action.

The ultimate response, as Azoulay argues, is "the passion for a pure spectator who will encounter the image, be appalled by what is revealed, and successfully change the world through her active response to it" (181). However, realistically "such a hope inevitably results in disappointment through the repeated confrontation with the absence of such a spectator" (Azoulay 181). My hope is that a spectator abandons her or his liberal democratic lens of looking at a photo and uses instead a citizenship lens of watching the photo to allow the photo's arguments of emergency claims and citizenship to become present. Even Azoulay argues "to steady one's gaze on the photographs, to direct one's look at what is revealed by each and every one and to assume responsibility

for how what is visible is articulated into discourse – this is sometimes all that a citizen can do” (Azoulay 182).

Without the citizenship lens an image will never be able to “testify to what is revealed through it, but must be attached to another image, another piece of information, another assertion or description, another grievance or piece of evidence, another broadcast, another transmitter” (Azoulay 181). As I look at the photo, using the liberal democratic lens, I find myself searching for more images to testify to the importance of the photo. I conduct extensive research to locate all the possible recirculations of the photo, which are in Chapter 1. Even that was not enough to testify that the photo was revealing something to me. With more research I find myself always wanting to find more evidence to help support my objective analysis that allows for political inaction. By doing this, I foreclose any potential of engaging the civil contract of photography lens and solely using my liberal democratic lens. By looking at the photo from my liberal democratic lens, I look at the photo and then walk away, which forecloses my potential to engage in effective and inclusive political action. However, by engaging in the civil contract of photography I am able to watch the photo, have the emergency claims of catastrophe present, and become a global citizen who advocates for citizenship that is not based on the nation-state’s distinctions between citizen and noncitizen.

It is only through the civil contract of photography that emergency claims can be produced, presented, heard, and acted upon because photography is the only way that citizens and non-citizens who have been rendered invisible can be made visible (Azoulay 182). In this sense, all those who partake in the civil contract of photography function as

activists. Activists of the civil contract are “parents, teachers, lecturers, artists, workers, and merchants” who “assume local responsibility toward what is visible” (Azoulay 182). Activists of the civil contract understand they have a local responsibility that “cannot be separated from its global conditions” (Azoulay 182). In this sense, the citizen has a moral obligation to be an active global citizen because if a spectator does not the emergency claims present in the photo such claims will “be dismissed from the historical trail, like dust blowing in the wind” (Azoulay 186).

The photo’s emergency claims of catastrophes demand that I, as a global citizen, assume responsibility. As a result, I have become an activist of the civil contract.

Anytime I am in a graduate class, having a conversation at a coffee shop, or attending a lecture series where nation-state citizenship is being discussed, I make sure to advocate for the civil contract because it is my responsibility to do so. I also make an effort to discuss citizenship in my classrooms. Starting a classroom discussion among a portion of the world’s citizens is a start for challenging exclusion and the distinctions between citizens and noncitizens to no longer exist.

Currently I teach Public Speaking and to date I have had discussions of citizenship with at least 150 college students. The course requires that students give speeches on topics that are matters of public concern and within their speech students must construct a rhetorical audience. The intention of the speech is that students be able to give the speeches to the public in order to alter the status quo. After class discussions on citizenship many students frame their speeches around the rhetorical audience as global citizens. Given that “the citizenry of photography is a global form of relation that

is not subject to national regimes...and is not entirely obedient to global logic” this is one way to challenge the hegemonic order’s understanding of citizenship (Azoulay 124).

The examples that I have provided are my starting points for advocating for the civil contract. I have a long way to go until the nation-state’s distinction of citizenship can be ridden of. Only through advocacy can such an exclusionary understanding of citizenship be challenged. I encourage privileged citizens to challenge the nation-state’s construction of citizens and noncitizens to create a space where the boundaries of citizenship are not vulnerable to violence.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

This thesis focuses on a photo taken on January 26, 2011, by Reuters photojournalist Amr Abdallah Dalsh of an unknown woman gesturing at Dalsh and his camera. The photographed woman is centered between two armed officers, who appear to be forming a police line with their bodies. The photographed woman is not looking at the officers. Instead, her gaze is directed through the officers to those on the other side. She is wearing a hijab that dangles over her left shoulder. The photographed woman's left arm is in the air as she gestures a "V," a victory sign. What follows is a summary of my two distinct arguments, an analysis of the photo's political productivity, a discussion of its rhetorical implications, a detailing of the limitations of this study, and an identification of areas for future research.

#### Summary of Arguments

I make two distinct arguments in this thesis. First, from a perspective of looking, the photo challenges the state's authority through body rhetoric, Manichean symbolism, and the visual ideograph of <"V" for Victory> because the photo represents veiled Muslim women as agents. The photo displays a woman protesting in Tahrir Square, which responds to both the Mubarak regime and dominant Western imperialist assumptions that veiled Muslim women are powerless and incapable of being agents of change. The photo's display of body rhetoric, use of Manichean symbolism, and deployment of the visual ideograph of <"V" for Victory> constitutes veiled Muslim women as agents of political change against oppression and repression from Egypt and

the US. The photo is important because it represents the possibility of rupturing Western patterns of looking, a rupture which occurs in the photo's complexity. The photographic strategies of body rhetoric, Manichean symbolism, and <"V" for Victory> re-entrench the Western liberal democratic lens while also challenging it. Ultimately, the photo functions as a space for critical analysis because it challenges Western representations and assumptions of veiled Muslim women through the photographic strategies. What follows is a brief summary of the photographic strategies of body rhetoric, Manichean symbolism, and <"V" for Victory>.

Through body rhetoric, the photo simultaneously engages and challenges the Western liberal democratic lens with the photographed woman's beauty, hijab, clothing, eye contact, open mouth, hand gesture, and body argument. What follows is a summary of this analysis. I argue that while the woman's beauty fits Western standards of beauty her hijab does not, which is interesting because the presence of the hijab adds complexity to a spectator's understanding of the photo. In the context of the photographed woman's hijab, the woman in the photo is seen as exotic because the woman's hijab is a marker of difference that is deviant from Western normalized dress. As a result of her exoticness, a Western spectator may be induced to continue to gaze at the photo.

The photographed woman's clothing engages in the Western liberal democratic lens, while also challenging it, because the photographed woman's clothing shifts a Western spectator's view from seeing her as oppressed to instead seeing her as an agent. In addition, the woman's eye contact engages and challenges the Western liberal democratic lens because the photographed woman is in the East, or coded as being

Eastern, where eye contact may be seen as an act of aggression or disrespect. By engaging in direct eye contact, the photo challenges Western liberal democratic understandings of veiled Muslim women as being submissive. The photo not only challenges veiled Muslim women as being submissive through eye contact, but also through the photographed woman's display of anger.

The photographed woman engages and challenges the Western liberal democratic lens through body argument. The woman's body is at risk by being in front of and in between male uniformed armed CSF officers. The officers symbolically block the woman from interacting with the West, which is important because the officers can be seen as aggressors given that they are in uniform and riot gear. The woman represents the individualistic, liberal democratic order by functioning as the text's hero. The photographed woman's body argument represents liberal democracy because it demands fundamental values such as equality, justice, individualism, and self-determination of citizens through democratic dissent. The body argument in the photo not only embodies these core liberal democratic values, but also functions as a model for those who seek visibility and justice through the civic participation of non-violent protest. The photographed woman's body argument not only engages the Western liberal democratic lens, but challenges the idea that veiled Muslim women - in particular Egyptian women - are helpless victims who need the US to save them from oppression. The photo also highlights veiled Muslim women as agents of change - beings who are capable of demonstrating against the state(s), in this instance the Mubarak regime and the US.

The second strategy the photo uses to engage and challenge the Western democratic lens is its use of Manichean symbolism. Through lightness and darkness, the photo represents the woman as the Self. Through lighting, the spectator establishes a relationship with the woman because, in the clash of good and evil, she represents good as a veiled, Muslim woman. This is different from how women in the *Time.com* and *Time* photographs are constructed as the Other. Rather than viewing her as the Other, a spectator relates to the woman because she functions as a hero. The photo becomes a celebration of individualism because it is the lone individual who risks her/his body to protest against the state and, by doing so, appropriates the collective identity of Egyptians and veiled Muslim women.

The third strategy the photo uses to engage and challenge the Western democratic lens is its use of the ideograph of <“V” for Victory>. <“V” for Victory> became symbolic and political during the Egyptian Revolution of 2011. By displaying the “V” for Victory symbol, protestors repeat their understanding that they are part of a collective group that cannot wait until the Mubarak regime and US influence in Egyptian politics falls. <“V” for Victory> demonstrates that Egyptians have internalized Western norms and embraced a liberal, visual ideograph. By appropriating and using <“V” for Victory>, Egyptians challenge their oppressors, the US and Mubarak regime. Asserting a “V,” through her out-stretched arm, and commanding attention with her eyes, the woman performs her agency by challenging the US’s imperialistic logic and the Mubarak regime’s oppression.

Ultimately, a Western spectator’s gaze at the woman is problematic because it

results in the woman being seen through a gaze that otherizes her. A spectator's gaze otherizes her because while the photographed woman, during particular moments, fits Western liberal democratic notions, at other moments she does not and is otherized. For example, the photographed woman's beauty fits Western norms of attractiveness, but her hijab does not. For a Western spectator, the presence of the representations of the Third World become a spectacle for the Western gaze. Yet, even as the photo participates in Western ways of looking, it also contains the possibility of a disruption of that gaze.

The second part of my argument critiques Western looking patterns and demands spectators abandon their liberal democratic lens to embrace a civil contract of photography. The difference between looking and watching is that, when watching, spectators hold their gaze for an extended period of time and continue to come back to a photograph in order to continue to gaze. By sustaining their gaze, spectators watch the photo like a movie where the events in the photo begin to move, both forwards and backwards. In addition, spectators use both strategies of looking and watching a photo.

However, a spectator should realize that the lens of watching is a better form of citizenship than the lens of looking. As a result, spectators must always ask "what does the photo want from me?" in order to engage in a political act. In by doing so, a spectator should accept the four obligations of the civil contract of photography. The first obligation of the civil contract of photography is that a spectator must no longer look at a photo, but watch. Second, the spectator must be positioned as watching the photo through the lens of shared citizenship. Third, the spectator must engage in a call to action of sharing an obligation to struggle for those who are photographed. Finally, in order for the

civil contract of photography to function, the spectator must shift from being the addressee to becoming the addresser. What follows is a summary of these four obligations of the civil contract of photography.

While the photo is in contrast to other photos circulating of veiled Muslim women and, through visual rhetoric and visual strategies, the photo analyzed in this study responds to arguments about veiled Muslim women lacking agency, the photo can only do so much. Spectators must ask an important question when looking at a photo: “What does the photo want from me?” (Azoulay 11). Only by asking such a question can a spectator move beyond looking at photos as interesting frames that raise awareness to engaging in a call to action in accepting the civil contract of photography.

A spectator should accept the four obligations of the civil contract of photography. The first obligation is to shift from looking at photos to watching photos. Photos capture motions that can be seen over and over again. This is because photos are two-dimensional images that appear on paper and are photographic acts of reality. Only through *watching* can such motion in the photo appear because *looking* results in the photographed being “disconnected from any spatial or temporal context” (Azoulay 386). By watching a photo, a spectator accepts one component of the civil contract of photography.

The second obligation of the civil contract of photography is that a spectator should position the self as a citizen in the citizenry of photography who enters a dialogue with the photo (Azoulay 122-123). This dialogue is important because it creates recognition, on the spectator’s part, that one can enter into dialogue with a number of

photos, and not just the photo of the woman, and makes present historical and current oppressions, injustices, and privileged citizenships that once could not be seen through the liberal-democratic perspective. It is only through the demands, political action or recognition, of the photograph that dialogue can begin. And, it is only when a spectator engages in a dialogue with the photo can such political action or recognition be achieved.

The third obligation of the civil contract of photography is that a spectator must engage in a call to action to struggle in solidarity with the photographed woman. By engaging in a shared obligation to struggle, spectators overcome their notions of flawed citizenship. In order to struggle for the photographed woman, spectators must rethink their citizenship as a status or private property to be owned. Instead, spectators alter their citizenship, through accepting the civil contract of photography, by becoming global citizens who have an obligation to the photographed woman regardless of whether she is considered a citizen or noncitizen of the state (Azoulay 19).

The fourth obligation of the civil contract of photography is for the spectator to function as the moral addressee and addresser (Azoulay 339-341). By bearing witness to the photo's grievances, a spectator is called to take action because the photo demands recognition and justice. Photos call on spectators to become active global citizens and transform their lens of looking at photos into political acts. Such political acts vary in their level and degree. But, no matter the degree of these political acts, the shared commonality is that global citizens challenge the nation-state's dichotomy between citizens and noncitizens. Sometimes all a spectator can do is to direct their gaze at photos and assume responsibility for what is made visible (Azoulay 182). This political act is

important because only when spectators alter their gaze can the liberal-democratic perspective be abandoned and can they effectively and explicitly engage in opposition to the hegemonic order (Azoulay 182). By abandoning their liberal democratic lens of looking at a photo, spectators position themselves as citizens who “take responsibility for what is visible and the way in which it unfolds in the discourse” (Azoulay 182). Only through such responsibility can exclusionary rhetoric and the hegemonic order be challenged. What follows is an analysis of the photo’s political productivity and rhetorical implications.

### Implications

The photo is politically productive because it provides Western spectators a different, though still legible, way of understanding and engaging photos through rhetoric, politics, and visual culture. The photo is an important medium; it not only functions as evidence of the event but also induces political action because it confronts a spectator’s privileged citizenship given populations that are more prone to be photographed are individuals who are part of marginalized populations (Azoulay 166). By displaying a veiled Muslim woman, the photo confronts the hegemonic order that prioritizes lives based on their status of citizen or noncitizen.

Through the civil contract of photography, spectators recognize their privilege and are called to take action because once injustice is made present, they cannot ethically turn away. Instead, spectators must use their privilege to engage in political action to prevent exclusions of disenfranchised populations such as the photographed woman. Individuals can challenge dominant understandings of privileged citizenship that



perpetuate distinctions between citizens and non-citizens. My starting point is daily conversations and within every class I teach. I encourage all individuals to challenge the dominant understanding of citizenship in hopes of achieving inclusivity.

Another way to challenge privileged citizenship is to protest against the US's current involvement in Egypt. Currently, the US federal government sends military aid to Egypt that, in turn, can be used against Egyptians who protest the governing regime. Time.com reporter Mark Thompson argues that "up to 80% of the Egyptian military's weapons-buying budget comes from Washington" (par. 1). This is problematic because Egyptian military weapons, which are primarily paid for by the US, are used to slaughter Egyptian citizens who protest. The Republican Representative of New York and Chair of the Intelligence Committee Peter King argues that, because the US needs to maintain influence in the Arab world, "we certainly shouldn't cut off all aid" (qtd. in Thompson par. 6). As a result, the Obama administration has taken steps necessary to withhold financial aid to the Egyptian government, however "not the much larger military aid on which Egypt's generals depend" (Landler and Shanker, par. 1). US military aid to Egypt is problematic because it is like an IV, "but instead of an *intravenous* drip delivering life-saving medicine to an ailing patient, it's closer to an *influenza vaccination* designed to keep Egypt's generals under some – increasingly limited – sway of the US government" (Thompson, par. 3). Privileged citizens can use their power to influence governmental officials to stop prioritizing the needs of the privileged and start prioritizing the needs of those who continue to suffer.

In addition, the critical lens a spectator uses for analyzing a photo should be the same lens used to decide whether Western countries, such as the US, should intervene in Muslim countries, such as Egypt, in order to save women who do not need to be saved. Individuals must challenge and critically analyze constructed rhetorical situations by governments, governmental officials, and mass media. For example, in 2003 President George W. Bush's administration intentionally saturated mass media with images of Muslim women in burqas to demonstrate oppression in Afghanistan as a means to justify the US invasion of that country. These dominant institutions guide dominant assumptions, which marginalize minorities (Muslim women) and celebrate majorities. What follows is an analysis of how this study contributes and is useful for rhetorical theory and criticism.

Rhetorical criticism of this photo is an example of how patterns of looking from a liberal democratic perspective select what is made present in a photo while ignoring historical and contemporary privileging of nation-state citizenship. The photo of the woman initially only received attention because of its use of liberal-democratic strategies such as body rhetoric, Manichean symbolism, and "V" for Victory. Such analysis of photographic strategies calls attention to spectators being able to engage in both looking and watching patterns. Through the pattern of watching, a concept credited to Azoulay, the photo makes present the violence and oppression of nation-state citizenship. The photo functions rhetorically to politicize the complexity of looking, watching, and citizenship. Ultimately, this analysis concludes that Azoulay's civil contract of photography is a better ethical strategy because it helps spectators critique traditional

understandings of citizenship, foster discussions, and engage in political actions in hopes of achieving global respect and inclusivity.

Visual rhetoric scholars analyze looking patterns of photos. In addition, Azoulay's analysis of the civil contract of photography does not consider how photos can be complex when understood through a liberal-democratic lens. Overall, rhetorical scholarship does not articulate how spectators can use both strategies of looking and watching and how, ultimately, a spectator should use a lens of watching because it is a better form of citizenship than the lens of looking. My rhetorical analysis of a photographed woman hopes to contribute to rhetorical scholarship by presenting two different spectator perspectives of the liberal democratic lens and civil contract of photography lens.

A civil contract of photography is rhetorical because it makes clear rhetorical exigencies that exist in photos through emergency claims. This is because an emergency claim presents an issue or situation that causes a spectator to do something. These rhetorical exigencies are further explored through the shift in spectator viewership. A civil contract of photography is useful for rhetorical theory and criticism because it highlights an alternative understanding of how photos argue. The civil contract of photography is important because it challenges traditional understandings of photographic argumentation as visual aesthetic and grammar, which tend to focus on circulation. Instead, photos, through the civil contract of photography, function as a process.

Argumentation scholars analyze photos through a lens of looking. However, this lens of looking is problematic for rhetorical scholars because it ignores individuals who experience violence and the process of historical violence due to distinctions in citizenship. The argumentative strategy of inducing a spectator to watch instead of look at a photo is one that has been missing from the field of rhetorical theory and criticism. Therefore, my analysis suggests that argumentation scholars must critically analyze the complexity of looking and ultimately abandon this position. Instead, argumentation scholars should embrace the strategy of watching photos. What follow are the limitations of this study and areas of future research.

#### Limitations

I recognize there may be two limitations to this study. First, the woman in the photo may lose her agency because I may be speaking for her and the analysis is focused on the photo and not on her individual politics. Second, I predominately focus my analysis on a photo of a Muslim woman which ignores the identities of Muslim men. What follows is an analysis of each of these two limitations.

First, The woman in the photo may lose her agency because I may be speaking for the woman and because attention is on the photo, rather than on her individual politics. Her individual politics may be important to understanding why she displayed her body wearing a hijab instead of a burqa (or neither) and why she placed her body at risk. In addition, her individual politics may be different from the arguments that I have made, which results in my interpretation silencing her voice.

Second, my analysis draws attention the unknown woman and by doing so, deflects attention and may erase the identities of Muslim men. In photos from the 2011 Arab Spring, Muslim men were predominant and the presence of women was almost absent. I recognize that the identities of Muslim men are important and therefore acknowledge the deflection as a limitation. In addition, singling out a Muslim woman instead of Muslim men may reaffirm post-colonialism. These limitations provide an avenue for future research that can be developed and is important for scholars to explore.

#### Future Research

There are three areas for future research. First, a future study could argue that the photo engages in social protest rhetoric. Second, a study could analyze < “V” for Victory> of photos during the Arab Spring or analyze the use of the ideograph throughout historical social protests. Finally, scholars should understand what photos do to our understanding of the Arab Spring protests -- in particular, what photos do in regards to global citizenship. Photos need further critical inquiry because

the widespread use of cameras by people around the world has created more than a mass of images; it has created a new form of encounter, an encounter between people who take, watch, and show other people’s photographs, with or without their consent, thus opening new possibilities of political action and forming new conditions for visibility. (Azoulay 22)

Scholars such as Cloud and Ayotte and Husain have found that images of Muslim women are a rallying point for public support of war. Future research should continue to fill this void in literature, in the field of visual rhetoric and gender studies, by taking a critical/rhetorical approach to challenging Western politics in relation to North African

and Western Asian countries and transforming such political divisions into acts of participation of global citizenship.

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