THE OTHER IN US:

CAPTURING THE AMERICAN IMAGINARY IN A VISUAL IMAGE OF THE IRAQ WAR

by

AMANDA RAE THORSON

(Under the Direction of Belinda A. Stillion Southard)

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the uptake and circulation of one iconic image of the War in Iraq. Taken in 2003, the image of two American Soldiers, one Iraqi man, and the infamous Statue of Saddam Hussein became one of the most circulated images of war throughout the United States. Specifically, this thesis looks at the ways in which this iconic image (re)creates the American national imaginary at three different moments in the war: 2003, 2010, and 2013. Throughout the analysis, citizens relate to the image in three different ways—as citizen-liberators, citizen-democratizers, and citizen-commemorators. This investigation addresses the way in which nationalism, identification, and definition can be mapped onto the same image at three different points in time and illustrates how one visual image works within the democratic process. Overall, this study contributes to what we know about visual rhetoric, citizen identities, and iconic images of war.

INDEX WORDS: Visual Rhetoric, National Imaginary, Commemoration, Iconic Image

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*"*What opened for the State, therefore, was another kind of body politics: the politics of blood and tongue—the politics of *nation* and *culture.* This was the moment when culture emerged as concept, formation, and machine. It was not the machinery of civilization and cultivation…it was an incorporative machinery: a machinery of capture and of identification that took power as coregent with the instruments of justice and the disciplinary regime, the One-Eyed Man and the One-Armed Man, each with its own form of violence, its own form of capture, and its own form of meaning."[1]

--John Tagg *The Disciplinary Frame*

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"We become what we think about." –

Earl Nightingale

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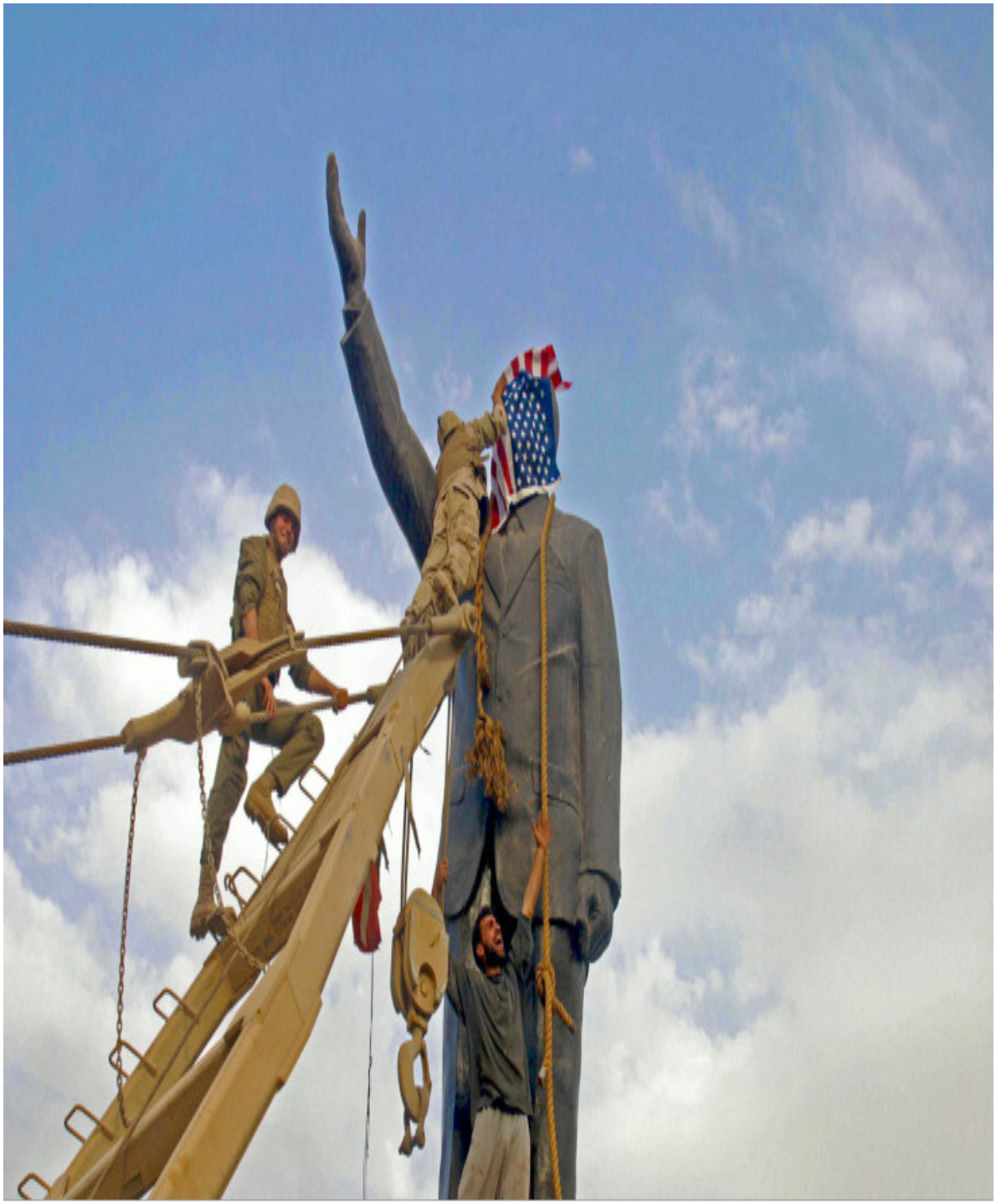

CHAPTER 1

CAPTURING THE AMERICAN IMAGINARY: INVESTIGATING THE CITIZEN-LIBERATOR, CITIZEN-DEMOCRATIZER, AND THE CITIZEN-COMMEMORATOR IN *TIME'S* COMMEMORATION OF THE IRAQ WAR

Among wartime images, few take on the status of iconic photographs. According to Robert Hariman and John Lucaites, "iconic photographs are images produced in print, electronic, or digital media that are widely recognized, and understood to be representations of historically significant events, activate strong emotional response, and are reproduced across a range of media, genres, or topics."[2] Extending Hariman and Lucaites's theory of the iconic image, the image above produced strong emotional responses, which I argue, are generated from *at least three different ways* audiences understood it as a representation of a historically significant event. These three different understandings reflect the way the image's meanings shifted and constituted different identities at heightened points of its circulation. These heightened points occurred throughout the duration of the Iraq war: in 2003, 2010, and 2013. These shifts in meaning beg closer examination of war images at certain moments in their circulation. More specifically, these shifts lead us to a significant inquiry: what does this image tell us about how American citizenship identities have shifted throughout the war? How do images of war constitute Americans as liberators, democratizers, and commemorators?

And finally, what can we conclude about the visual resources made available to justify war?

As news reports of the war emphasized, April 9, 2003 marked the infamous fall of Saddam Hussein's statue in central Baghdad. The sixteen-foot, 200 ton bronze statue of Saddam Hussein, was pulled down by an American army tank using a rope pulley system. News coverage honed in on the statue's demise, as the large structure, with a rope tied noose-like around its neck trembled once, and then crumbled at the statue's knees and toppled over. Hundreds of Iraqi citizens in Firdos Square crowded around the splintered statue and angrily began to kick and jump on its remains. Among the remnants of the statue, members from the crowd dissected the head of the statue and dragged it through the streets of Baghdad. Moments before the statue toppled over, the photograph above was taken, and it captured what became one of the most symbolic moments in the Iraq War.

The image is framed upwards, where the background is a blank visual field of clouds and sky. The photograph's clear, empty backdrop allows the form to become the focal point of the viewer's gaze. The configuration of the photograph is marked by two angles and three bodies. The first angle is the statue, pale gray, creating the vertical axis of the photograph, its hand defiantly positioned in the air, emphasizing the image's upward framing. A yellow industrial ladder rests on the statue creating a diagonal line across the image. The yellow ladder holds a rope and pulley, which is situated around the statue's neck. Two military officers stand on the yellow ladder, resting against the statue. One is posed halfway up the ladder, frozen in the motion of an upward climb. Holding onto the pulley, he confidently looks off into the distance. The second military officer is

not facing the camera but instead, looks to the top of the ladder, holding a flag over the face of the statue. The statue's gray face is covered by the bright hues of a red, white, and blue American flag. At the base of the image where the line from the ladder and the vertical line from statue draw a locus point of focus, a brown-skinned, Iraqi man stands with both his hands up, one toward the sky, the other holding onto the rope that connects the pulley system, which has the power to bring the statue to its knees.

This image captures what became the iconic moment of the American invasion of Iraq. Taken three weeks into the Iraqi War, the image anchors the experience of the war for American citizens, as many viewers of this image considered the war a success. As Hariman and Lucaites relate, iconic images "reflect social knowledge and dominant ideologies; they shape understanding of specific events and periods; they influence political action by modeling relationships between civic actors; and they provide figural resources for subsequent communicative action."[3] Soon after the fall of Baghdad, this image was one of the most circulated pictures of the Iraqi War throughout the world.[4] The covering of the statue with the American flag and then impending fall of the statue quickly became the dominant image of the day's news. According to CNN, the shot ran an average of four times every half hour or once every seven and a half minutes.[5] Thus, the historic significance of the "Flagged Saddam" image was constructed by the performance and reproduction of American media outlets that broadcast the image repeatedly as a signifier of resolve and American victory. This photograph has been placed on posters[6], used in political cartoons[7], and continues to be a repeated focal point for 9/11 and Iraq War memorials.

Just as public opinion of a war alters over time, shifts in cultural climates occur, reflected and generated by the way American citizens view images of war in different ways. To make this case, this project unfolds in three parts. In its second chapter, this project seeks to further examine the image and circulation of "Flagged Saddam" in 2003, at the apex of the Iraq War. To this end, I use Ariella Azoulay's notion of "emergency claims"[8] to argue that the shared history of struggle for freedom between Iraqi citizens and American citizens prompted action from the American audience to see themselves as citizen-liberators. As support for the war waned, the image experienced an uptick in circulation in 2010, calling for a new examination of the image. Thus, in this project's third chapter, I focus on how, in 2010, viewers identified more with the Iraqi man in the image. I argue that after experiencing varying degrees of disillusionment with the war, Americans identified with the struggle of the Iraqi people as part of a shared national imaginary. Faced with the reality that "liberating" the Iraqi people was unrealistic, Americans saw themselves as citizen-democratizers, hoping to empower the Iraqi people with the agency to govern themselves. In my last chapter, I focus on the image's most recent increase in circulation, in 2013. This image, most currently, is circulated through a commemorative viewing mechanism in *Time Magazine's* 2013 online gallery. I argue that the force of the image is drawn from a third focal point of the photograph: the flag covering the face of the statue of Saddam Hussein. I argue that at this point, Americans have shifted their focus onto the flag as they have shifted toward a commemorative orientation to the war. Specifically, I analyze the way in which the gaze shapes and is shaped by national affiliations that are continually fractured. Indeed, this current circulation generated a polysemic response from viewers, constituting them as citizen-

commemorators. Circulating after ten years, the "Flagged Saddam" image, thus, continues to generate different meanings for Americans.

An Emergency Claim: The Citizen-Liberator

In my second chapter, I grapple with the way in which the "Flagged Saddam" image called upon American citizens to liberate Iraqi citizens at the onset of a war in the 2003. Using Azoulay's notion of "emergency claim" this chapter endeavors to highlight the intricate relationship between citizenship and photography by analyzing the force of the soldier as citizen-liberator in the "Flagged Saddam" image.

Both citizenship and photography have long histories that are not often thought of as intertwined. In a recent book entitled, *The Civil Contract of Photography,* Ariella Azoulay traces relationships between photography and citizenship in disaster contexts.[9] The work analyzes the way in which, since the onset of photography in the mid-19th century, looking at photographs and making them speak have become part of a civil practice.[10] The innovative theory laid out in this work is founded upon the conceptualization of citizenship as a framework of partnership and solidarity among those who are governed. This framework is neither constituted nor circumscribed by the sovereign, instead Azoulay argues that photography has the ability to suspend the gesture of the sovereign power.[11] While the nation-state creates a bond of identification between citizens and the state, Azoulay insists that more than just being governed, this framework encourages a sense of duty first and foremost toward one another, rather than toward a ruling power. Azoulay argues that the power of photography occurs when the current conditions of visibility of disasters allow catastrophe to be witnessed, addressing a

citizen-spectator.[12] Thus, civic spectatorship has the duty to actualize the passage of the photograph from stagnant horror to the motion of what Azoulay refers to as an "emergency claim."[13] Insofar as the traces of injury or unrest are imprinted on the surface of the photographic image, they are "awaiting the spectator to assist them."[14] This assistance comes in the form of additional verbal and textual support from outside of the photograph.[15] Therefore, the emergency claim induces textual and visual expressions that describe catastrophe, disaster, and civil unrest as it happens.

In 2003, American citizens witnessed the height of an impending war with Iraq through mediated images from across the globe. In my analysis, I look at the "Flagged Saddam" image as an Emergency Claim in a pivotal photograph, which called upon American citizens to liberate the Iraqi people from governmental tyranny. In the visual praxis of the emergency claim, the American citizen identifies with the soldier, who responds to a catastrophe and lends assistance from the world's most powerful democratic nation-state.

The National Imaginary and the Citizen-Democratizer

In my third chapter I explore the circulation of the "Flagged Saddam" image in the cultural climate of 2010. In this section, I use the term "national imaginary" to analyze the way in which American identifications shifted over the course of seven years to that of the Iraqi man, as we became citizen-democratizers.

Many previous studies have noted the ways in which visual commemorative formations influence national and cultural conceptions of American identity.[16] While many scholars have noted the difficulty in delineating exactly what "American identity"

entails, especially as a construct intonated with legal, cultural, and social meanings, visual images appear to reify nationalistic expectations. Often, nationalism helps justify war, as well as continued involvement in war. In the case of the Iraq War, nationalism shaped the slogans, "remember when," "never forget," and "united we stand." These terms, which refer to September 11, were used and re-used to justify continued involvement in the Iraq war. They called upon Americans to (re)identify with the nation in the face of a common enemy. In this way, national identity was rhetorically constituted in order to gain support for war. Thus, when analyzing a change in support for the Iraq War, it is necessary to review the role that national identity plays in the creation of a nation. Specifically, the following reviews how national identities are created—especially through imagined communities—, and then more specifically, how an American national identity is formed.

National identity refers to a person's sense of belonging to a state or nation, or, a feeling one shares with a group of people. Often, one can possess this sense of belonging regardless of one's citizenship status. Many scholars have adapted the idea of national identity and further theorized its application in public culture. Benedict Anderson, for instance, theorizes the nation as an "imagined community."[17] Anderson defines an imagined community as different from an actual community because it is not based on everyday face-to-face interaction between its members. Instead, Anderson relates: "the nation is based on an imagined political community, which is imaged as both inherently limited and sovereign."[18] These communities are imagined as both limited and sovereign, limited in that nations have "finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations," and sovereign since "no one monarchy can claim authority over them."[19] Anderson's

theorization of the nation as a socially constructed community accentuates the vitality of identification in the conceptualization of the nation.

American identity is (re)constituted and defined by war—especially when mediated. The study of nationalism and national identity focuses on the themes of imagined communities, historical representations, and new technologies. The sense of national belonging becomes critical when an external threat occurs, as individuals seek to unite with fellow citizens to oppose an outside threat. This threat, and the national reaction to the threat, has become moderated by the media with which national citizens engage. In addition to understanding how nationalistic rhetorics (re)constitute American identities, this chapter works to examine the rhetoric of "Flagged Saddam" to help us understand how we see America as a national imaginary, and furthermore, how visual rhetoric constructs American citizenship. This analysis looks at American national identity as the imaginary unity that is both decomposing and being rewritten by means of war commemoration. American national identity is the projection that looks back into the mirror as we imagine ourselves as not just individuals but a collective national identity that we construct as likable ourselves. Thus, this chapter uses the feature of the Iraqi man to analyze the way in which the national imaginary shapes Americans as citizen-democratizers.

The Gaze of the Citizen-Commemorator

In my final chapter, I address the way in which “Flagged Saddam” rhetorically operates within its most recent circulations in a 2013 *Time Magazine* photomontage. In this section I analyze the “Flagged Saddam” image through the lens of the gaze in order

to assess the way in which the every viewing is always filtered through viewing mechanisms, which effect not only how we see war, but also, how we remember war as citizen-commemorators.

The gaze is a psychoanalytic term first brought into popular use by Jacques Lacan.[20] This concept means that the awareness of any object can induce an awareness of also *being* an object. Thus, the gaze offers a new way of understanding visual rhetoric, which articulates the process of viewing and the viewer's desire to see. Furthermore, analyzing the gaze offers us a way to comprehend alignments of power in visual images as the American gaze structure the ways of seeing *Time's* image of "Flagged Saddam".

The gaze offers a way of understanding the nuances of visual rhetoric and how it associates with structures of power and control. Together, these theoretical conceptions line the basis of visual theory as we now turn to the way in which that theory is (re)produced by the politics of memory and commemoration. Collective memory can be understood as the ability of a community to remember events, or the collection of memories shared by a common culture. Collective memory operates under the assumptions that a social group's identity is constructed through narratives and traditions that give its members a sense of community.[21] Significant to this project, memories of national traumatic events are considered collective phenomena, and remembered through linguistic and visual reproductions throughout time. The construction of monuments, national holidays, and yearly memorials functions to highlight specific narratives and details while they occlude other elements from the reproduced narrative of an event. Throughout history visual images have functioned as a way to recall past events. Thus, visual culture and collective memory act as co-constitutive entities.

The rhetoric of collective memory communally constitutes audiences—and most importantly for this project—it constitutes citizens. These audiences can include citizens of a local community to those of a nation-state. Focusing on the point of the flag covering the statue of Saddam Hussein, this chapter is specifically interested in the ways in which the gaze operates within the "Flagged Saddam" image as virtual-visual commemorations of war shape American civic identities by creating citizen-commemorators. The iconic image of "Flagged Saddam", most currently, is circulated through a commemorative viewing mechanism in *Time Magazine's* 2013 online gallery. This current circulation has generated a polysemic response from viewers. Throughout ten years of circulation, the "Flagged Saddam" image has generated multiple meanings throughout the course of the war. This image begs further consideration for how we visually commemorate, and potentially, justify war as citizen-commemorators.

Preview of Study

In brief, this study asks: in what ways do visual images operate within the democratic process? How does the image call upon notions of civic duty? How does a cultural climate alter the ways in which "Flagged Saddam" is viewed? This study argues that the "Flagged Saddam" image demonstrates the way that visual images aid in democratic processes. In doing so, the image re-orients itself in three different ways.

In 2003, the image of "Flagged Saddam" is projected as an image of national unity. Thus, chapter 2 asks: In what ways did American citizens unite to liberate the Iraqi nation? The 2003 take analyzes the projection of the confident American soldier, aiding in the liberation of the Iraqi man. Framed within the context of Ariella Azoulay's

Emergency Claim, this chapter addresses American's mounting financial and social support for the Iraq War in 2003. In analyzing the intricacies of "Flagged Saddam" this evaluation exposes how Americans see themselves as citizen-liberators.

In the wake of atrocities and human rights violations abroad, "Flagged Saddam" circulated in 2010 and called upon the identification of American citizens with the triumphant Iraqi man. Thus, chapter 3 centers on the question of identification. It asks: how do American's re-imagine themselves to be part of a benevolent, virtuous country in the face of evidence that demonstrates otherwise? Through a study of the American national imaginary in 2010, this exploration finds that, through a logic of closure, the re-suturing of the American narrative was a necessary process for the (re)imagination of an ethical democratic system.

Chapter 4 addresses the ways in which "Flagged Saddam" operates commemoratively in 2013, on the 10th anniversary of the Iraq War. This chapter investigates how the commemorative gaze shapes American citizens' recollection of the war. It asks: When looking back on ten years of war, how do Americans define the country's actions? Using the gaze as a lens to navigate Americans' desires for a holistic, altruistic nation, this chapter traces the shift in American consciousness that redefined how the Iraq war was viewed.

Overall, this study contributes to what we know about visual rhetoric, citizen identities and iconic images of war. It addresses the way in which nationalism, identification, and definition can be mapped onto the same image at three different points in time. Furthermore, this study illustrates how one visual image works within the democratic process.

CHAPTER 2

EMERGENCY CLAIMS AND THE CITIZEN-LIBERATOR

"To relinquish civil intention is to create the conditions for the ascendance of civil malfunction characterized partly by its own inability to recognize the malfunction. Put differently, where there is no civil intention, there is civil malfunction—and nothing stands in the breach."
Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Imagination*

Take #1—2003

The specter of the September 11, 2001, attacks still loomed in the shadows of the American cultural climate of 2003. The year began with all eyes on Iraq as U.S. coalition forces prepared for war.[1] In months prior to the declaration of war on Iraq, slogans of "remember when," "never forget," and "united we stand" appeared in stores, on cars, and were uttered by many American citizens. After months of heated debate, On September 12, 2002, President George W. Bush addressed the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and listed complaints against the Iraqi government.[22] These complaints included human rights violations, a breach in the terms of the weapons inspection program, potential support for and hiding of terrorist organizations, and the production and use of biological, chemical, and long-range missiles of mass destruction.[23] On February 5, 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell addressed the UN.[24] Acknowledged as "the most fully articulated case for war in Iraq," Powell's speech shifted the cultural

climate of war from looming to imminent.[25] Appealing to the audience by citing Saddam Hussein's numerous human rights violations, Powell's speech operated in a way that uncovered what Hussein had attempted, "to deceive, to hide, to keep from the inspector" for the audience to comprehend the depth of threat—which helped justify America's invasion of Iraq. On March 19, 2003, troops attacked the Middle Eastern country.[26] The ensuing military campaign included the large-scale aerial bombing, which resulted in the fall of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad. More than just a dictator, Hussein was thought to have access to weapons of mass destruction. The danger of this claim was not just in the destructiveness of the weapons, but also in the widely accepted presumption that these weapons would be used against Western civilization. Within this climate of war anxiety, visual images from abroad became crucial tools to understanding the war that took place on the other side of the world.

The invasion of Baghdad marked a pivotal point in the occupation of Iraq. As troops dispersed over the Iraqi terrain, air attacks continued to be featured on the nightly news in American homes. April 9, 2003, is recognized as the collapse of Saddam Hussein's tyrannical regime with the fall of his statue in the center of Firdos Square. This image, christened "Flagged Saddam," became the iconic image of the American invasion of Iraq. Taken three weeks into the Iraqi War, the image helped American viewers perceive the war as a success. As Robert Hariman and John Lucaites relate, iconic images "reflect social knowledge and dominant ideologies; they shape understanding of specific events and periods; they influence political action by modeling relationships between civic actors; and they provide figural resources for subsequent communicative action."[27] Soon after the fall of Baghdad, the image of the American flag that covered the statue's

face was one of the most circulated images of the Iraqi War throughout the world.[28] According to CNN, the shot ran an average of four times every half hour or once every seven and a half minutes.[29] Thus, "Flagged Saddam" was introduced to the American public as a sign of American victory. By 2003, "Flagged Saddam" was reproduced and appropriated, placed on posters,[30] used in political cartoons,[31] and today, is a focal point for 9/11 and Iraqi War memorials.

On my view, this image performs conceptualizations of victory, nationalism, and unity through its reuse, and in doing so, reflects social knowledge, dominant ideologies and the cultural climate of 2003. I will analyze the way in which "Flagged Saddam" operated as an Emergency Claim in 2003, which called upon American viewers to liberate the Iraqi nation. To examine the rhetorical force of the photograph, I first discuss citizenship as a visual State of Emergency in the United States in 2003. Next, I discuss non-citizenship as expressed through the civil contract of photography. Finally, I analyze the "Flagged Saddam" photograph as an Emergency Claim that calls for action from American citizens. I conclude the essay with a discussion of the implications this photo has on Azoulay's theory of Emergency Claims.

A Visible State of Emergency

Photos of war often appear through mainstream outlets, fringe outlets, and, as always, some temporarily (or permanently) buried in archives. The multitude of images from war in Iraq include charred corpses of Iraqi soldiers frozen in position or burned vehicles with occupants caught inside. Other photographs depict the experiences of American soldiers in action: moving through desert backdrops, walking through war-torn

cities, or running away from landmine explosions. Other images include the consequences of war: ruined buildings, refugees and camps.[32] When viewed individually or all together, these photographs focus on war and its horrors as something that can be seen. Since these images have the potential to sway and form public opinion about the war, analyzing them tells us more about how they are used to justify war. In order to analyze the 2003 "Flagged Saddam" image through the lens of Ariella Azoulay's Emergency Claim, I will touch on Azoulay's conceptualization of photography, how it connects to ideals of citizenship and non-citizenship, and finally, how the civil contract of photography could be used to expand theories of visual analysis.

Citizenship Formations and The Civil Contract of Photography

First, Azoulay conceptualizes photography as a tool that has the potential to unite citizens around the world. Both citizenship and photography have long, intertwined histories. In her recent book, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, Azoulay traces the relationship between photography and citizenship in disaster contexts.[33] Azoulay's argument hinges upon previous theorists, most notably, Roland Barthes's conceptualization of photography as testimony to the fact that something or someone "was there."[34] Azoulay's theory of photography and citizenship follows:

> Addressing these photographs is a limited, partial, sometimes imagined attempt to respond to the photographed figure, an attempt to reconstruct the part it played, which is sometimes difficult to discern at first glance, and to realize, even if fleetingly, a space of political relations between those who are governed, a space in which

> the demand not to be ruled in this way becomes the basis for every civil negotiation.[35]

Thus, Azoulay challenges the mid-nineteenth century ideal that photographs speak as part of civil practice.[36] Instead of the photograph as testimony or proof, Azoulay views the question of citizenship as the prism through which all images evoke a spectator of the photograph.

Second, Azoulay argues that photography communicates ideals of citizenship and non-citizenship. Regarding citizenship, she says, practices of citizenship have long been employed as a means of identification between citizens and the state. These practices, Azoulay argues, are intricately linked to photography. Practices such as identification photos on driver's licenses' and passports are the most common forms of identification. Azoulay contends that these processes are necessary for citizens to identify with the government and with one another.[37] On the other hand, to Azoulay, non-citizenship means that citizens are not governed. Focusing specifically on governance through mechanisms of visual images, Azoulay explains these mechanisms as follows:

> They allow the state to divide and govern—partitioning off noncitizens from citizens—and to mobilize the privileged citizens against other groups of ruled subject…emphasis on the dimension of being governed allows a rethinking of the political sphere as a space of relations between the governed, whose political duty is first and foremost a duty toward one another, rather than toward the ruling power.[38]

The conceptual links between photography and citizenship are twofold. The photographic image gains meaning through recognition with some citizens under the same governance

and misrecognition with others. Citizenship is negotiated and gained through recognition and, like photography, is not something that can simply be possessed. Azoulay's *The Civil Contract of Photography* is an attempt to anchor spectatorship in civic duty toward non-citizens who enable the rethinking of the concept and practice of citizenship. In this way, Azoulay's contract works to reconstruct the political space where photographed persons participate as citizens. In this space, relationships are not formed by empathy or mercy, but by a want for the rehabilitation of citizenship in the overall political sphere of governance. The innovative theory laid out in this work is founded upon the conceptualization of citizenship as a framework of partnership and solidarity among those who are governed. This framework is neither constituted nor circumscribed by the sovereign, instead Azoulay argues that photography has the ability to suspend the gesture of the sovereign power.[39] While the nation-state creates a bond of identification between citizens and the state, Azoulay insists that more than just being governed, this framework encourages a sense of duty toward one another rather than toward a ruling power. Azoulay argues that the power of photography occurs when the current conditions of visibility of disasters allow catastrophe to be witnessed, addressing a citizen-spectator.[40] Thus, civic spectatorship has the duty to actualize the passage of the photograph from stagnant horror to the motion of what Azoulay refers to as an "Emergency Claim."[41] Insofar as the traces of injury or unrest are imprinted on the surface of the photographic image, they are "awaiting the spectator to assist them."[42] This assistance comes in the form of additional verbal and textual support from outside of the photograph.[43] Therefore, the emergency claim induces textual and visual expressions that describe catastrophe, disaster, and civil unrest as it happens. Azoulay's theory conveys photography as a

mechanism of governance and as a device that provides the opportunity to continually re-define citizenship, and its boundaries.

Third, Azoulay expands upon theories of visual rhetoric because she argues that photography can be used for new modes of political contestation and ethical engagement. Azoulay's theory of photography expands the space of the state through a borderless "civil contract of photography," especially since she posits that photography is intimately connected to citizenship across borders and nations. This contract binds together photographers, photographed persons, and spectators in a shared set of citizenship expectations.[44] Azoulay explains, "citizenship is the relationship between the citizen and the sovereign power."[45] Thus, a citizen does not necessarily have to live in a particular state or participate in a particular political system in order to identify with a form of power or citizenship—even though—under the law they may be considered "non-citizens." In 2003, images from Iraq contributed to anxieties about an impending war. The media characterized Saddam Hussein as a tyrannical dictator who abused the "rights and liberties" of his people. Aided by images of mothers, children, and tortured lives of the Iraqi people, notions of citizenship identities in the United States began to shift.

Throughout American history, many instances of marginalization and discrimination have cast individuals in the role of "non-citizens." Historically, race, gender, sex, and class were large factors of full United States citizenship. Many previous studies have noted the ways in which visual images exist, interact, and influence national and cultural conceptions of American identity and citizenship.[46] While many studies have noted the difficulty in delineating exactly what "American identity" entails, especially as a construct intonated with legal, cultural, and social meanings, visual images appear to

reify nationalistic expectations. Cara Finnegan observes the influence of visual culture and racial identity in the United States, noting how presidential portraits have allowed viewers "to elaborate an Anglo-Saxon national ideal," especially during times of increased anxiety about "the fate of the 'American' identity."[47] Robert Hariman and John L. Lucaites address citizenship's challenging conceptualization as it relies on iconic images, which have a "visualizing power" to make abstract concepts concrete. [48] Moreover, the power of iconic visual images to enact a rhetorical understanding of citizenship points to the role iconic images play in shaping public culture and, most importantly, American identity.

The civil contract of photography offers a new perspective on the importance of visual arguments by articulating a formation of citizenship productive for intervening in the violent spectacles of modern times. Azoulay's theory is founded on the notion of images as arguments that have material effects. The civil contract of photography highlights the need to contend to the rhetorical conditions of an image's emergence and circulation. Azoulay's theory asks how audience, contexts, persona, and composition collide to generate a web of meaning for potential argumentative usage. In this way, Azoulay's theory challenges the ways in which we articulate the meanings and habits of citizenship, which radically transforms the arguments possible to respond to violent acts occurring all over the world. In the following analysis, I argue that the material effects of the civil contract of photography are present in the 2003 viewing of the "Flagged Saddam" image.

Emergency Claims and The Citizen-Liberator

An emergency is a situation involving calamity or moral peril that demands immediate treatment. Often, an emergency situation is produced from an entanglement in disaster, war, terrorist attacks, massacres, catastrophes, or accidents, but it also emerges from ongoing poverty, misery, abuse, or humiliation. "Emergency," as a term, encompasses both the description of the situation and the prescription of how it should be handled. A horrible event that occurs and is designated as an emergency requires some type of action to be taken. More than just a state of emergency, which happens between the ruling power and its subjects, an Emergency Claim is mediated through citizenship. According the Azoulay, an Emergency Claim, "testifies to three facts: that a disaster exists; that it is an exception to the rule, one that necessitates immediate action in order to terminate it; and that there is someone who wants to assume the position that allows immediate action to be taken in order to terminate it."[49] In the next few paragraphs I examine these three crucial parts to an Emergency Claim in the "Flagged Saddam" photograph.

The Iraq War was recognized as a disaster for both the US and Iraqi nations. The state of emergency in America in 2003, following the September 11, 2001 attacks and war on terrorism soon became an emergency zone as threats of weapons of mass destruction and human rights violations in the nation of Iraq circulated through American media outlets. The invasion of Iraq in March 2003 did more than oust tyrannical dictator Saddam Hussein, it also left citizens of Iraq, now non-citizens, without a form of government. Thus, for the purposes of this analysis, I consider Iraq's state of emergency. On April 9, 2003, one image became one of the most iconic of the Iraq War. In the

middle of Firdo Square, a 200-ton statue of Saddam Hussein stood on a nine-foot-tall pedestal looking down upon a riot.[50] Iraqis rioted in the streets of Baghdad, some in support of the American invasion, some against, but all aware of the government upheaval, and current non-governed state.[51]

The meaning of an Emergency Claim enables the spectator to participate in a community of citizens that recognize disaster through a commonly accepted framework.[52] "Flagged Saddam" functions as an image of disaster because of previously constructed notions of what disaster entails. For the American viewer, the framework of an oppressive government is viewed in a disaster context.[53] This context inflates the disaster to convey opposition between forces. The "Flagged Saddam" image accomplishes this task first through its scaled proportions. The giant statue of Saddam Hussein is captured in the "Flagged Saddam" image, as not just looming over, but dwarfing the small Iraqi man. The yellow industrial ladder even seems minute in comparison the large gray slab of stone representing the previous ruler of Iraq. Thus, the scale of the photograph operates to evoke the presence of Saddam Hussein's reign through its disproportional scale. In this way, the proportionality of the photograph, and the vast size of the statue, initiate American viewers into a narrative of catastrophe. The image, framed in an upward position, heightens awareness of the difference in scale and calls upon the looming historical background of a tyrannical government. Accordingly, Americans can view this image as an Emergency Claim because it ignites a sense of urgency to, again, unify as a nation and assist the Iraqi nation. In the case of this image, American citizens were at once assured that a disaster exists and they were called to take action in the form of monetary, political, and social support for the war. More specifically, in 2003 the

United States remained the largest government donor to UNICEF, providing a total of $288 million for its cause to children's rights throughout the world. This amount was greatly increased from its resources contribution of $119 million in 2002. Non-govermental and private sector donations grew significantly acquiring a 12 percent spike in donations from 2002 to 2003.[54] This increased in economic funding paired with an influx of war support and propaganda in political polls[55] and social media groups[56] suggest that Americans viewed this image in 2003 within the framework of a disaster.

The United States of America is familiar with disaster, however, the Iraq War was framed as separate from other catastrophes as it called for immediate action. While Iraq is not the first country that America has assisted in government overturn, the narrative of government struggle is easily identifiable with historical American plights for freedom and equality. Thus, the image of the Emergency Claim is embedded in a discourse, and related to the elements of the person(s) that it addresses. The "Flagged Saddam" image conveys Americans as liberators as the confident American soldier liberating the now triumphant Iraqi man looks off into the distance, presumably, at an American audience watching at home. With one symbol of freedom and democracy, the American soldier, the image inserts an American history of strife, struggle, and self-rule into the new narrative of the Iraqi people.

In 2003, the American soldier in "Flagged Saddam" became an American citizen-liberator—one who answers the Emergency Claim. His face points out to the crowd below and his feet are positioned in an upward motion to continue up the ladder. The confidence and poise of the soldier in the "Flagged Saddam" image reframes this image for an American audience in which the soldier is actively liberating the Iraqi man.

Captured at the moment he turns around to face the crowd below, this soldier resembles the iconic American war hero: courageous, confident, and benevolent. This is not the first time that Americans have been asked to identify with a certain visual identity. Cara Finnegan observes the two-way influence of visual culture and identity in the United States, noting how presidential portraits have allowed viewers "to elaborate an Anglo-Saxon national ideal," especially during times of increased anxiety about "the fate of the 'American' identity."[57] The historically gendered disposition of US citizenship is visible in the circulation of highly-masculine American icons and popular US images.[58] Barbara A. Biesecker demonstrates how these "reconstructions of the past function rhetorically as civic lessons for a generation beset by fractious disagreements about the viability of US culture and identity."[59] Through an in-depth reading of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial, she exemplifies how this commemorative formation "challenges conventional wisdom" and "makes visible" an often overlooked practice of women's citizenship.[60] Therefore, the production of citizenship can be viewed as intimately linked to the process of visual commemoration, especially when coupled with war. The soldier's role in the "Flagged Saddam" image addresses rhetorical narratives of white masculinity and the American soldier.

The juxtaposition between the confident soldier and the exultant Iraqi man in the "Flagged Saddam" image called upon American ideals of civic duty, citizenship, and freedom. These ideals have been woven into the fabric of American standards most notably by English poet Rudyard Kipling's 1899 poem, "The White Man's Burden."[61] The poem depicts an assumed obligation that white people inherently have to rule over and encourage the cultural development of people from other cultural backgrounds until

they can take their place in the world economically and socially. In America, these ideals of cultural imperialism are laced with calls for national duty of Americans as a "World Super Power."[62] Dana Cloud aptly argues that the ideas embedded in visual images emphasized American justifications for war in Afghanistan were linked to the idea of the "white man's burden." She contends that through the binary oppositions of self and Other, America adopted a paternalistic stance toward the women of Afghanistan, and the figuration of modernity as liberation.[63] In this way, these images formulated a set of justification for war that further shaped conceptions of citizenship and public life during wartime. In similar fashion, "Flagged Saddam" invokes narratives of white man's burden and civilization to positively represent colonialism. What is captured in the image is a moment of triumphant victory from a presumed oppressor. This scene reinforces the dominant narrative of the white man liberating the brown man from persecution. This liberation, highlighted by the stance of the American soldier and the gesture of relief of the Iraqi man, is painted as a national duty. The rhetorical force of the soldier not only calls upon citizens from the United States to support the war, but also each showing of this image in its 2003 circulation reaffirmed that liberation was not only noble, but it was successful.

The soldier's significant place in the image most aptly operates within a state of emergency of war. Historically, narratives have depicted war heroes as courageous, white soldiers braving unknown territory. This unknown territory, most often, is depicted as racially inferior. Similarly, representations of the reign of terrorism worked in accordance with historical accounts of colonization. Yet, these accounts were neglected in wake of the anxieties surrounding national security and terrorism. In 2003, the "Flagged Saddam"

image operates within homologous grooves of this narrative. Calling upon the historical narratives of plight and power, the Emergency Claim asks Americans to relate with the soldier, most dominantly, through his act of liberation. In this way, the message becomes distant from racial politics as the Emergency Claim coaxes the American public to identify with the American soldier on the basis of presumed goodwill and humanitarian efforts.

In "Flagged Saddam" the soldier stands in metonymically for the American public. In this frame, Americans like to view themselves as liberating the Iraqi people from a disaster context. Because the climate of the invasion of Iraq was one of immediacy, the spectator is called "to take part, to move from the addressee position to the addresser's position in order to take responsibility for the scene in the photograph by addressing them even further, turning them into signals of emergency, signals of danger or warning, transforming them into emergency claims."[64] Thus, the Emergency Claim works to enforce a call to action, a civic duty for American citizens watching the news coverage live on television and seeing the image cast and recast on the days news. That call to action is a familiar call for liberation laced with a strong support for the war. The Emergency Claim operates as a call to action for American citizens to renew support for the war in Iraq. As a contract of citizenship, the Emergency Claim acts as a way of defining the rhetorical exigence of the photograph. The exigence, in this instance, is the demand to stem civil violence as an affirmation of civil duty. The significance of this exigency is situated within a pluralistic apparatus wherein the photograph takes on multiple meanings. Photography is a set of relations in which no single spectator can own or colonize meaning. These relations are especially important in the context of disaster

and catastrophe. Images of trauma demand a heightened moral responsibility on behalf of the spectator to reconstruct the photographic event and respond to the claims articulated by the photograph. Thus, the photograph operates as a fragment within a larger discursive economy. The photograph, as an Emergency Claim, creates a civic space for contemplation that transforms political consciousness through its contemplation, negotiation, and call for civic action. The social, political, and economic support for the war as highest in 2003 at the height of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In this way, "Flagged Saddam" operates as an Emergency Claim that addresses a citizen-liberator in the way that it metonymically bounds the American soldier to the American citizenry. Indeed, the claim stages a narrative of liberation, which masks a narrative of war.

In instances of emergency, citizens are called upon to unite and defeat potential threats or injustices. The call to liberate functions as a familiar frame for Americans as it has been utilized in previous invasions of war-torn countries such as Grenada, Kuwait, and Vietnam.[65] In these instances the Emergency Claim entices the spectator to liberate the subject in the photograph. Addressing the spectator as a human and citizen in an emergency frame, the spectator responds as the citizen-liberator. In this way, the Emergency Claim worked not only to justify war, but also to explain the complete invasion of another country. The Emergency Claim highlights the immediate need for action by obfuscating the differences and consequences from similar previous situations. As Americans we're called to recognize an emergency from across the world through the lens of an Emergency Claim, their response was to become citizen-liberators and support the foundations of freedom and opportunity.

Conclusion

Warfare as a means to end inequality is not a new intervention tactic for America. The struggle for equal rights in America started with the American Revolution from Great Britain, and has continued through many iterations protest movements throughout American history. Shared American values, such as liberty, undergirded these struggles. The Declaration of Independence states the belief that, "all of mankind is created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights and that among them is the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of personal happiness."[66] These values are repeated during times of social change and unrest to unify American citizens.[67] Azoulay's theory of photography extends notions of citizenship, and citizenship values, to citizens and non-citizens in need. Thus, American notions of "liberation" are reappropriated to citizens and non-citizens across the globe by means of Emergency Claims.

In 2003, American citizens witnessed the height of an impending war with Iraq through mediated images. The image of "Flagged Saddam" operated as an emergency claim in a pivotal photograph, which called upon American citizens to liberate the Iraqi people from governmental tyranny. In the visual praxis of the emergency claim, the American citizen identifies with the soldier, responding to a catastrophe, by lending assistance from across the world. While its reception and uptake in 2003 was treated as a pivotal, symbolic victory—a moment in the Iraq War when ordinary Iraqis, freed by valorous American soldiers, triumphantly tore down the tyrannical image of the dictator—this was not the case in the image's future iterations. In 2010, seven years later, its representation in media outlets secures the image's place within a plethora of other images of a seemingly unending war.

CHAPTER 3

NATIONAL IMAGINARY AND THE CITIZEN-DEMOCRATIZER

Take #2—2010

The reception and uptake of the "Flagged Saddam" image in 2003 was treated as a pivotal, symbolic victory—a moment in the Iraq War when Iraqis, freed by valorous American soldiers, triumphantly tore down the statue of a dictator. This was not the case in the image's future iterations. Over the course of seven years many developments captured the attention of the American public. Notably, reports torture and prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. These reports indicated the physical and sexual torture of Iraqi inmates by the American military, and were accompanied by visual images of torture in the prison from late 2003 to early 2004.[68] More than the graphic depiction of war crimes such as rape and murder, these images marked a human rights violation, which ignited a crisis of national identity for the American public wherein narratives of American benevolence ceased to correspond. While this was not the first instance or report of American cruelty acknowledged by the American public, the circulation of information and images of the torture at Abu Ghraib internationally re-signified American identity in the Iraq war. In 2004, after images of inmates torture surfaced, Archbishop Giovanni Lajoli, foreign minister of the Vatican released a statement observing the extremity of Abu Ghraib: "The torture? A more serious blow to the United States than the September 11, 2001 attacks. Except that the blow was not inflicted by

terrorists but by Americans against themselves."[69] As a people that prided itself on free speech, open government, and altruism, Americans were shocked by the release of these photographs. In this way, images of torture changed visual identification with the "Flagged Saddam" image as Americans began to dis-identify with the narrative of liberation that shaped the climate during "Operation Iraqi Freedom." Americans then wished to remove themselves from the conflict, and in turn, to empower the Iraqis to lead themselves. [70] Thus, the narrative shifted from liberation to democratization.

This analysis looks at American national identity as the imaginary unity we continually re-write. American national identity is the projection in which we imagine ourselves not just as individuals but as part of a collective. At times of war, we often imagine ourselves as members of a benevolent and humanitarian nation.[71] In 2010, when the "Flagged Saddam" image circulated, Americans identified with the Iraqi man who held up his hands in triumph. In order to assess the shift in focus from the American soldier to the Iraqi man, I first conduct a review of the key terms associated with national imaginary and national identity. Next, I argue that the 2010 circulation of the "Flagged Saddam" image repositioned viewer identification after seven years of war. This re-identification aptly registered a shift of imaginary identification from the American soldier to the Iraqi civilian in this photograph, as the narrative of American liberation shifted to one of American democratization. In this analysis, I consider (re)formations of American national identity in the 2010 circulation of the "Flagged Saddam" image through the logic of closure, which dually issues respect for the Iraqi nation and, again, (re)composes the American national imaginary.

Visualizing American National Identity

As a rhetorical construct, nationalism is a symbol that undergoes constant revision. Moreover, different groups orient themselves to this symbol in different ways. In this way, nationalism is a "homogenizing, differentiating, and classifying discourse" that aims its appeal at people presumed to have certain things in common.[72] Benedict Anderson addresses these commonalities in *Imagined Communities*.[73] In the following section, I engage with the ways in which Anderson conceptualizes the nation. First, I unpack Anderson's notions of the nation as an imagined community with a specific culture, tradition, and history. Next, I address the ways in which nationalism is linked to times of war and advances in technology. Finally, I explore Anderson's theory of simultaneity. In all, Anderson's theories help illuminate the narrative shift of the image and the logic of closure surrounding the "Flagged Saddam" image's second round of mass circulation in 2010.

National identity refers to a person's sense of belonging to a state or nation, or a feeling one shares with a group of people. Often, one can possess this sense of belonging regardless of one's citizenship status. Benedict Anderson theorized the nation as an "imagined community."[74] Anderson defined an imagined community as different from an actual community because it is not based on everyday face-to-face interaction between its members. Instead, Anderson explains: "the nation is based on an imagined political community, which is imaged as both inherently limited and sovereign."[75] These communities are imagined as both limited and sovereign. They are limited in that nations have "finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations," and sovereign since "no one monarchy can claim authority over them."[76] Anderson's theorization of the

nation as a socially constructed community accentuates the necessity of identification in defining and reifying the nation.

The notions of nationalism and national identity began taking shape after the first World War.[77] Socialism and Nationalism, in particular, gave rise to two orientations toward the nation: as either ahistorically and aculturally formed, or as historically formed. Key theorists including Lord Acton and Otto Bauer viewed nationality—or one's association with the nation—as disconnected from the geographic nation-state.[78] This turn in nationalist theory is significant since nations are often defined in terms of what they are not (i.e., other nations), thus, the idea that nations aren't defined by geographic boundaries conveys a turn in literature on national identity. Even though many nations are populated by citizens with genealogical connections to the land they inhabit, national identity is formulated less so on the grounds of a connection to the land, and more so from the connections, stories, and shared beliefs of other national citizens. Considering many nations are populated by peoples from multiple ethnic and national heritages, this view of national identity better reflects how people orient to the nation-state, especially in terms of imagined communities.

According to Anderson, the creation of the imagined community only became possible because of print capitalism. Capitalist entrepreneurs printed their books and media in common vernacular in order to encourage maximum circulation. As a result, readers speaking various dialects became able to understand each other, as a common discourse emerged.[79] Over time, imagined communities have come to be mediated differently, first through print, then images, television, and now electronic mediums. While Anderson argues that national identity is not an inborn trait, but a direct result of

the presence of elements from the "common points" in peoples' daily lives, he concedes, "the national identity of most citizens of one state or one nation tends to strengthen when the country or the nation is threatened militarily."[80] The sense of national belonging becomes critical when an external threat occurs, as individuals seek to unite with fellow citizens to oppose an outside threat. This threat, and the national reaction to the threat, is often mediated through familiar modes of communication, including print, television, and most recently, the Internet.[81]

Anderson's dual focus on time and space attend to how community members define and situate themselves within the boundaries of their communities. The term that Anderson uses to encapsulate the temporal and spatial phenomenon of the nation is simultaneity. As Anderson defines it, simultaneity is, "the idea of an organism moving calendrically through homogenous, empty time…it is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which is also conceived of as a solid community moving steadily upward or downward in history."[82] According to Anderson's definition, the member imagines the community existing at the same time within certain limits. Members of a community can pass each other on the street without recognizing one another and still belong to the same community. In this way, simultaneity marks the outer limits of the temporal and spatial imagination by linking national breadth and depth to any discourse linked to a print medium. Simultaneity, then, depends on a logic that connects the specific to the general. This formal logic makes it possible to imagine national activities within a coherent, bounded community.

The simultaneity of a nation depends wholly on the circulation of information within that imagined community. In Anderson's account, readers of information

disseminated nationally identify both with the audience addressed by narrator and the characters in the narrative. In this way, the enclosure of the imagined community rests upon the existence and awareness of like-minded readers who share similar identifications.[83] The "we" of nationalism can be linked to the actualization of these two identifications. Each act of reading and understanding is a re-creation of the community. Accordingly, through confidence in the steady, anonymous, and simultaneous activity, the act of shared imagination (re)produces the nation.

In total, Anderson offers a thesis that nations are creations of modern communication networks. Both belonging to a nation and the nation itself depend on individual perceptions rather than on objective factors such as borders and natural resources. Anderson views people's sense of belonging to a nation through the lens of various media that connect citizens across broad distances. The coherence of his perspective depends on communities of similar languages. Accordingly, members of these communities are required to have similar levels of literacy, as well as access to similar information. In this way, circulation of materials to an imagined community creates the means by which communities develop simultaneity and make sense of information and compose narratives. To point, the narrative composed from the circulation of the "Flagged Saddam" image in 2010 differed greatly from the narrative of the image in 2003, thus prompting questions about a shift in not just public opinion, but national identity.

The Democratic Nation (Re)Imagined

A nation's narratives are composed, understood, and rewritten according to how a nation projects itself as an imagined community. Reports of US citizens committing human rights violations in Iraq shifted the 2003 narrative of liberation to a new narrative of democracy. In the following analysis, I address the 2010 shift of the American national imaginary, which I assess through the "Flagged Saddam" image. I argue that the image's 2010 circulation allowed the nation to re-suture imaginary identification in a way that reclaimed national identity in the face of its crisis, condoning a logic of closure in American relations to Iraq, and crafting anew, the citizen-democratizer.

Democracy was the master signifier in the creation of American national identity and the 2010 iteration of "Flagged Saddam." Nationalism does not require that members of a nation should all be alike, only that they should feel an intense bond of solidarity to the nation and other members of their nation.[84] Nationalism builds on pre-existing narratives and beliefs, and in the United States, these narratives and beliefs center on faith in democracy. Democracy is a form of government in which all eligible citizens participate equally—either directly or indirectly through elected representatives—in the proposal, development, and creation of laws. It supposes social, religious, cultural, ethnic and racial equality, justice, liberty, and fraternity. Accordingly, the characteristics of American democracy are built upon ideals of legal equality, freedom, and rule of law.

In the 2010 circulation of "Flagged Saddam" the Iraqi man was rhetorically compelling. The Iraqi man operated as an ideal focal point because it relieved our anxieties about oppressing a nation under the auspices of "liberation." The angles of the image best facilitate this relief. Specifically, the angles position the Iraqi man in a triangle with the two soldiers, positioning them as connected interlocutors, evoking the

harmonious and triumphant affective appeal of the photograph. Accordingly, the American soldier and the Iraqi man reflect one another in the upward positioning of their arms and similar tilt of their head, as though addressing each other and the audience below. In this way, the form, or the structural organization of signifiers within this image, create the effect of cohesiveness through the positioning of the Americans in an opposite angle to the Iraqi, and the corporeal positioning of the Iraqi's triumphant body at the front of the image, closest to the viewer. The 2010 circulation of "Flagged Saddam" occurred during a time of civil unrest in the United States, yet, it reified the democratic ideals of the American nation through its configuration of connected angles and symmetry.

The image's 2010 circulation highlighted many details of the image, the most important was the Iraqi man's grasp on the rope around the statue's neck. In previous circulations of the photograph, pro-war contexts promoted identification with the American soldier. The cultural climate of the 2010 viewing made the Iraqi man more salient to viewers. Accordingly, the details of Iraqi man's position in the photograph become more apparent as he symbolized the democratization of Iraq. Whereas in previous circulations, the Iraqi man seemed to stand in the background of the photograph, this viewing presented him as the individual closest to the viewer of the image. This affective proximity highlighted particular details in the image. Foremost, the Iraqi man's hands, which are lifted up in triumph, are connected to the rope pulley system hanging from the ladder. The Iraqi man's stance allows for one hand to be in the air referencing the rope, made noose, around the statue's neck, while the other hand is placed at the top of the rope pulley system. This placement suggested that the Iraqi man did not just participate in the statue's demise, but with support from Americans, he orchestrated the

rebellion. This image's particular framing and portrayal of the body of the Iraqi citizen as euphoric, triumphant, and instrumental in the symbolic hanging of Saddam, paints the American invasion of Iraq as an empowering spread of democracy.

The framing of the "Flagged Saddam" image cropped out the crowd of Iraqi citizens present the moment the image was captured. This framing isolated the Iraqi and American men in their common quest for the freedom of the Iraqi nation. For many Iraqi citizens, the American flag that defaced Saddam's statue was a symbol of US occupation, not US liberation.[85] Consequently, on April 9, 2003 civilian riots were reported throughout Iraq, most evidently, in the central city of Baghdad.[86] The image accounted for the events of the April 9, 2003 invasion of Baghdad, yet it only features three individuals out of the approximately two hundred present that day.[87] Despite a riot and army tanks, only three bodies animate the photograph. This is due to its upward framing. The chaos of the day is obfuscated as the image of "Flagged Saddam" only shows three men connected in what is suggested to be a common alliance for freedom and order in a renewed nation. This frame places the viewer in a position to view the three men alone. As viewers look up at the statue and the three men, the men seem connected in their actions to liberate the Iraqi nation from the tyrannical dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. This connection implies to US viewers that the Iraqi man participates just as fully as the US men to free Iraq. The construction of this connection is only possible because the image does not show the rioting crowd of Iraqi citizens in Firdos Square.

The Iraqi man in the image personifies the ideal of democracy that one representative speaks for many. The Iraqi man in the "Flagged Saddam" image is barely contrasted against the faded shading of the photograph and the statue behind him. The

focal point of the man's stance draws attention upward, toward his mouth, which remains open, as if he is trying to speak. The Iraqi man, situated as the spokesperson for the Iraq nation, becomes a synecdoche for Iraq's new democratic nation in the image's 2010 iterations. Kenneth Burke's synecdoche can be understood as a figure of reduction that often attaches a human aspect to a non-human entity.[88] In this image, the Iraqi man's mouth represents and personifies democracy. The isolated focus on the Iraqi man's mouth acts as one part of his body, which represents the whole of the Iraqi people's new system of expression: democracy. The core of democratic system of values is that by the 'rule of the people' is that the one can speak for the many.[89] Familiarity with the synechdochal logic of democracy allowed the American viewer to associate the Iraqi man with democratic representation in the 2010 iteration of "Flagged Saddam"

For American viewers, the Iraqi man in the 2010 circulation of the "Flagged Saddam" image performed ideals of representative democracy, though, not necessarily representative of the people of Iraq. A national community is conceived of as a deep comradeship. Regardless of the inequalities within the nation, the imagined alliance among the people of the same imagined nation is strong, but it is not totalizing. In this way, the ideal liberal democracy re-presents the idea of the many through the representation of the few. This ideal, however pushed, did not apply in the American democratization of Iraq. A news article published on July 27, 2010, noted the most pivotal issues in the Iraq War. It states, "In the past four years, attacks on coalition forces in Iraq have dwindled to about 100 per week from nearly 2,000 per week in 2006. It is estimated that there were 34,500 Iraqi civilian casualties from 2006-2009. Of those, 2,800 Iraqi civilians died violently."[90] As Iraqis staged protests and riots throughout the course

of the seven-year war, President Obama insisted that these performances were an outcry of the few, not the many. Instead, he said, "the U.S. will retain a transitional force to carry out three distinct function: Training, equipping and advising Iraqi Security Forces as long as they remain non-sectarian; conducting targeted counter-terrorism missions; and protecting our ongoing civilian and military efforts within Iraq."[91] President Obama's commentary re-directed the narrative of a conflicted nation's outcry, to that of democratic solidarity. In stating that the "force" of the United States's occupation in Iraq was to, "train," "equip," "advise," and "protect," Obama reiterated the ideals of a liberal democratic narrative in the face of crisis. Accordingly, American identification rested with the Iraqi man in the 2010 circulation of the "Flagged Saddam" image as it rewrote an American narrative of democracy.

Instead of calling for assistance from the citizen-democratizer, the 2010 presentation of "Flagged Saddam" provided closure as Americans viewed the Iraqi people as democratized. While American support for the war fell drastically after 2004, the national appeal of humanitarianism rights for Iraqis did not. Thus, images of torture at Abu Ghraib prompted Americans to recognize, briefly, the inherent contradiction in the supposedly benevolent and justified invasion of Iraq. The crack in the imaginary justification with the community of American citizens caused a crisis of identification. The image helped Americans re-identify themselves as an imagined community of democratizers, not oppressors, through their identification with the Iraqi man. This identification re-created a narrative of benevolence, this time, within the framework of the citizen-democratizer.

Through its presentations of transparency, solidarity, and representation, the 2010 circulation of "Flagged Saddam" united an imagined community of democratizers, again, around the narrative of democracy. As President Obama announced plans to drawdown troop support from the Iraq war, he explained, "Iraq's future is it's own responsibility and the end of the war will enable a new era of American leadership and engagement in the Middle East."[92] President Obama offered a sentiment that the 2010 "Flagged Saddam" image symbolized closure. The narrative of democracy overwrote that of terror and torture as Americans who viewed this image in 2010 were called upon to unite as citizen-democratizers by distancing themselves from the newly-democratic state of Iraq. The image, like the narrative of the war, was (re)written in its 2010 circulation. This sense of closure operated to ensure that nothing escaped the photograph as the narrative became totalizing. Thus, the citizen-democratizer disengaged from the war by actively disavowing its loose ends. In this way, the "Flagged Saddam" image promoted identification with the victorious, successful, Iraqi man, as democracy took over.

Conclusion

As a continually altering identity, American national identity is (re)constituted and defined by war—especially when mediated. The study of nationalism and national identity focuses on the themes of imagined communities, historical representations, and idealized narratives. More than just the (re)constitution of American identity by means of nationalistic representation, "Flagged Saddam's" 2010 circulation allowed Americans to re-imagine American national identity in the face of a crisis by identifying with the Iraqi man as citizen-democratizers. The narrative of liberation in 2003 was re-sutured to a

narrative of democracy in 2010 as imaginary identification rested with the Iraqi man. In this instance of identification, the (re)imagination of our national identity assisted in reconciling the inherent contradictions in American justifications for war. Thus, this analysis argues that notions of nationalism should be questioned more prudently. Looking forward into the globally mediated discourses of the future, I argue that we look at 'the nation' as not just a mere product of a nationalist public sphere, or as an articulation to the structure of a state's historical inevitability. Rather, I argue that we need to continually recognize the way in which the comfort we have in our own nation and our own language could be potentially harmful to imagining ourselves as a global community in the future.

CHAPTER 4

THE GAZE OF THE CITIZEN-COMMEMORATOR

Take #3—2013

On March 18, 2013, *Time* magazine commemorated the tenth anniversary of the Iraq war with a montage of 56 photographs of the conflict. Entitled "A Decade of War in Iraq: The Images That Moved Them Most," *Time* branded the montage as "a collection of testimonies…documenting iconic images of conflict."[93] Among the 56 images of conflict, one familiar image is the April 9, 2003 image of "Flagged Saddam." Although *Time* has long been of interest to scholars of visual rhetoric,[94] "A Decade of War" is representative of a newer visual mode: the "LightBox." *Time* still uses traditional images in its print version, which has a readership of 25 million—20 million of whom are in the United States.[95] Yet the magazine reaches 50 million more viewers through its web site.[96] Often the magazine's web site presents images interactively through its "LightBox" feature— a slideshow that allows viewers to click through a series of images, each accompanied by a descriptive caption. Even though "A Decade of War" is the fourth collection of *Time's* "iconic images of conflict" presented in "LightBox" form, it is the first collection to commemorate the anniversary of a war. Given *Time's* massive readership, this commemorative collection is especially intriguing to scholars who study war and commemoration.

Notably, scholars have shown the intimate relationship between American civic identity and war commemoration.[97] The war on terror, most notably, has a history of re-articulating American public culture and civic duty through rhetorical constructions of commemoration. As Brad Vivian has argued, "even today, ritual performances of such epideictic forms are intended to symbolically preserve cultural tradition, collective memory, and political order--not to stand apart from or transcend them." Scholars have previously studied the rhetorical contours of wartime visual memorialization as a ritual performance that re-establishes the significance of the war in an effort to amplify pro-war agendas and promote positive public opinion. Barbara Biesecker argues, "over the course of a series of visual encounters—a process that may justly be called mourning—the traumatic event or loss we have come to call '9/11' is progressively integrated into a psychic economy or symbolic order; the point of its integration marks the moment the subject is freed again to act, this time…in retaliation against a terrorist act that finds expression as public support for war." Thus, one would expect that on the tenth anniversary of the Iraq War's beginning, that pro-war sentiment would be high. Yet, on the day *Time* released "A Decade of War," public support of the Iraq War was at an all-time low. Indeed, A Gallup poll released Wednesday, March 18, 2013 contends that on the tenth anniversary of the Iraq War 53% of Americans understood the war to be a mistake.[98] By comparison, a 2003 Gallup poll reported that only 23% of Americans regarded the war as a mistake.[99] The same poll reports that 41% of Americans supported the war in 2013 as opposed to 76% in 2003. Therefore, in a single decade Americans went from majority support to a minority. Clearly, attitudes toward the war on Iraq shifted as the public opinion of the Iraq War has taken many different shapes in the past

ten years. While the absence of weapons of mass destruction and the general disillusionment with the war could help explain this loss of support, this project had looked at how visual images function in a less supportive climate.

On October 21, 2011, in his address to the nation, President Barack Obama announced that the war in Iraq would be over within 70 days, and that most of the US troops would be coming home during that period of time.[100] Today, almost three years after the majority of troops were pulled out of Iraq, the continual violence in Baghdad has led Iraq's leaders to seek new US aid to curb the threat of impending atrocities.[101] Thus, America is still intricately linked to Iraq, even though we have decreased our ground presence overseas. In this way, the means by which we commemorate the Iraq War significantly shapes not only how we see Iraq, but how we see ourselves in relation to the rest of the world. This display of national identity, in the wake of war atrocities and human rights invasions, requires a re-writing of identity narratives to, again, accentuate the virtuosity of America, and the American public.

This chapter analyzes the image of "Flagged Saddam," however, this time it does so from a commemorative standpoint. Grounded in previous scholarship that suggests our American identities shape and are shaped by the ways we "see" war, this chapter asks: How does the constitution of Americans as citizen-commemorators re-orient the ways that we "see" war? To answer this question I analyze image through the lens of the gaze in order to assess how every viewing of an image is always filtered through viewing mechanisms, which effect not only how we see war, but also, how we remember war as citizen-commemorators. I execute this analysis by first setting a theoretical foundation regarding the means of commemoration and how they influence the ways we understand

war. Next, I situate the Lacanian conceptions of the gaze within this formation. Finally, I analyze the way in which the commemorative outlook on the 2013 "Flagged Saddam" circulation filters the gaze of the American viewer. In this circulation, I argue our identification with the image is sutured at the point in the image where the American flag covers the face of Saddam Hussein, and, as nostalgia becomes the effect of the citizen-commemorator in this instance of viewing.

Collective Memory and Remembering War

Collective memory can be understood as the ability of a community to remember events, or the collection of memories shared by a common culture. Collective memory operates under the assumptions that a social group's identity is constructed through narratives and traditions that give its members a sense of community.[102] Significant to this chapter, memories of national traumatic events are considered collective phenomena, and remembered through linguistic and visual reproductions throughout time. The construction of monuments, national holidays, and annual memorials functions to highlight specific narratives and details while they occlude other elements from the reproduced narrative of an event. Throughout history visual images have functioned as a way to recall past events. Thus, visual culture and collective memory act as co-constitutive entities. The new techniques and modalities of visual culture in the age of new media, however, have altered the way in which collective memories are generated and re-framed.

The creation and maintenance of a collective or historical memory is a dynamic social and rhetorical process. Historical memory is created when members of a society or

culture continually talk and think about an event. This interaction process is critical to the organization and assimilation of the event, which is often categorized in the form of a collective memory. Maurice Halbwachs was one of the first to address the topic of collective memory. He asserted that all memories were formed and organized within a collective context.[103] All events, experiences, and perceptions are shaped by individuals' interactions with others. Halbwachs argues that society provides the framework for beliefs and behaviors, and their recollections of them.[104] Moreover, Halbwachs asserts that almost all memories are collective in large part because they are discussed with others.[105] In order for societies to increase the cohesiveness of their memories, its communications must be said, said again, and reenacted repeatedly.[106] Significant historical events form stronger collective memories, and present circumstances affect what events are remembered as significant.

Aligning with Ferdinand de Saussure's and Roland Barthes's views on meaning and discourse, the role of language in affecting collective memories is crucial to understanding its ongoing process. Translating events or images into language affects the ways they are thought about and recalled.[107] Language can be understood as a social act and a social construct. In this way, when an event is discussed, its perception and understanding is likely to be affected by others in the conversation. Moreover, language is a form of rehearsal.[108] The act of rehearsing an event through language can influence the way the event is organized in memory, and recalled in the future. Collective memory is a dynamic and unfolding process, thus, collective memory alters slightly in different contexts. These factors may be specific to time, place, mode of memorial or level of

trauma, though, all forms of collective memory are highly dependent on the role of the audience.

The rhetoric of collective memory communally constitutes audiences—and most importantly for this project—it constitutes citizens. These audiences can include citizens of a local community to those of a nation-state. Most commonly, sites of collective memory construct ideals of citizenship to patrons who visit them. Many rhetoricians have questioned the existence of public memory, specifically its prevalence in the monuments, memorials, murals, and statues that populate the nation's capital, and many other significant sites of American patronage.[109] Carol Blair explains,

> Memory and history, far from being synonymous, are thus in many respects opposed. Memory is life, always embodied in living societies and as such in permanent evolution, subject to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of the distortions to which it is subject, vulnerable in various ways to appropriation and manipulation, and capable of lying dormant for long periods only to be suddenly reawakened. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is always a phenomenon of the present, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past.[110]

Blair exposes the ability of collective memory to both conscript and commission ideal citizens through their narratives of history. These commemorative formations, which are in large part products of federal or state government agenda, are considered public art, and display instances of good citizenship.[111] Such spaces in which commemorative formations exist influence national and cultural conceptions of citizenship. Several scholars have noted that sites are not merely locations where rhetoric occurs, but are indeed rhetorical in their own right.[112]

Memorialization often focuses on the politics and commemoration of war. Thus, the rhetoric of war has been analyzed in conjuncture with politics of civic identity and citizenship.[113] Dana Cloud advances the visual ideograph, which discusses the war presented through means of visual media.[114] The ideograph, which can be understood as the use of particular words and phrases as political language in a way that captures (as well as creates or reinforces) particular ideological positions, was able to be mapped onto not just language, but also visual images.[115] Cloud argues that the ideas embedded in visual images emphasized American justifications for war in Afghanistan. In this way, these images shaped conceptions of citizenship and public life during wartime.[116] Barbie Zelizer and Michael Schudson argue that collective memory is partial, partisan, and frequently contested.[117] These contestations enact the re-narrativization of collective memory that, dually, encounters a process Bradford Vivian labels, "public forgetting."[118] While many scholars have noted the difficulty in delineating exactly what "citizenship" entails, visual images operate to help make nationalistic expectations knowable.

More than how we understand and commemorate ourselves as citizens, visual rhetoric constructs the way in which we signify Others through the gaze. The gaze is a psychoanalytic term first brought into popular use by Jacques Lacan.[119] It was used to describe the anxious state that comes with the awareness that one can be viewed. The psychological effect of that knowledge, Lacan argues, is that the subject loses a degree of autonomy upon realizing that she or he is a visible object.[120] This concept means that the awareness of any object can induce an awareness of also *being* an object. Understandings of the visual sign system has expanded from a process of signs that carry meaning to a signifier to acknowledging the sign as a visual concept that reinforces shared meanings in

specific audiences. The sign system offers a greater understanding of the construction and dissemination of messages, and the arbitrary way in which those messages come to have meaning. While helpful, these conceptualizations leave out an important element in analyzing visual culture: the viewer. Thus, the gaze offers a new way of understanding visual rhetoric, which articulates the process of viewing and the viewer's desire to see.

Analyzing the Gaze of the Citizen-Commemorator

Though treated separately, sign systems and the gaze constitute significant areas of research dedicated to visual rhetoric. The sign system offers a way to analyze the shared meanings of visual messages, and gives us tools to decipher how those messages construct memory, and consequently, culture. The gaze offers a way of understanding the nuances of visual rhetoric and how it associates with structures of power and control. Dually, rhetorics of collective memory communally constitute audiences—and citizens—which take on these visual structures of power and control. These audiences can include citizens of a local community to those of a nation-state. Focusing on the point of the flag covering the statue of Saddam Hussein, this chapter is specifically interested in the ways in which the gaze operates within the "Flagged Saddam" image.

The iconic image of "Flagged Saddam," most currently, is circulated through a commemorative viewing mechanism in *Time Magazine's* 2013 online gallery. Throughout ten years of circulation, the "Flagged Saddam" image has generated multiple meanings throughout the course of the war. In this analysis, I first look back on the way in which the gaze operates as a shift, or anamorphosis, between the 2003 and 2010 viewings of the "Flagged Saddam" image. Next, I discuss the way in which the gaze

orients national desires to filter the ways in which "Flagged Saddam" can be viewed. Last, I analyze the 2013 circulation of "Flagged Saddam" through the lens of a nostalgic gaze, which lends further consideration for how we visually commemorate, and potentially, justify war as citizen-commemorators.

In the "Flagged Saddam" image, the statue of Saddam Hussein exists as a signifier of the regime of Saddam Hussein. Language, particularly the signifier, introduces difference as it inhabits the subject. Slavoj Žižek explains, "the order of the signifier is defined by a vicious circle of differentiality: it is an order of discourse in which the very identity of each element is over determined by articulation, i.e., in which every element 'is' only its difference from others."[121] Thus, the signifier divides up and cuts up space, and the signifier becomes the landscape of reality. The symbolic, what we term "reality," is made up of these orienting differences as they have come to structure the laws, rules, and codes for everyday living. The visual is produced and understood in accordance with the symbolic. Accordingly, the statue of Saddam continually signifies the existence of the dictator in Iraq, and the international circulation of the visual image signifies a reign of terror and American vulnerability to the American public. While in power, Saddam was known for committing severe violations of human rights, among the most reported were torture, mass murder, rape, deportations, forced disappearances, assassinations, and chemical warfare.[122] Furthermore, Saddam reinforced his presence throughout the Iraqi nation through mounting statues of himself throughout Iraq. In April of 2002, this statue was erected in honor of Saddam's 65th birthday.[123] Located in the central square of the city of Baghdad, the statue operated as an eminent reminder of control and governmental power. In this way, for Americans, the image of the flag

covering the face of Saddam conveys the dissolution of Saddam's regime as it is covered and conquered by the representation of freedom and justice, the American flag.

In 2013, the American flag is the point of the gaze in the "Flagged Saddam" image. Because the gaze is the state of understanding that comes with the awareness that one can be viewed, the American flag in the "Flagged Saddam" image becomes the object cause of desire, or the *objet a* as it masks the previous *objet a,* the face of the statue of dictator, Saddam Hussein. At the time of "Operation Iraqi Freedom" the circulation of this image, and its specific attention to the flag, projects this image as one of American fantasy. Common narratives of American benevolence, conquest, and freedom circulated through its constant flow of broadcast and distribution in 2003. For the American viewer, these narratives projected the fantasy of American liberation as the point of imaginary identification rests with the soldier on the left side of the triangle. Captured at the moment he turns around to face the crowd below, this soldier resembles an iconic American war hero: courageous and full of goodwill. In 2013, however, the linchpin of the triangle is the American flag, where the gaze exists. As Lacan relates, it is "not a seen gaze, but a gaze imagined by me in the field of the Other."[124] In this way, the gaze produces awareness in any subject of also being an object. Thus the fantasy operates between the sign and the gaze—in this case the gaze is that of the American flag as mask. Herman Rapaport explains, "It is not an *object* that the subject imagines and aims at, so to speak, but rather a *sequence* in which the subject has his own part to play and in which permutations of roles and attributions are possible."[125] In this way the fantasy reveals how the subject and the object are linked in terms of desiring relationships. The function of the fantasy is to provide permanence to the structure of the subject's role in

consciousness. This permanence responds to the evanescence of the subject in the unconscious. The fantasy, in other words, reveals the difference between that part of the subject, which always finds itself as present and that part of the subject, which always loses itself as absent. Just as the American public locates the *objet a* as the flag, the gaze makes us aware of ourselves as objects. Furthermore, through our relation with the *objet a,* we are objects that identify with a common national identity, a narrative that makes us likable to ourselves, that of American victory, freedom, and benevolence.

In 2013, *Time* magazine's commemorative virtual archive, "A Decade of War in Iraq: The Images That Moved Them Most," replicated the "Flagged Saddam," however, the image takes on a new signification when viewed seven years after the war's beginning. In this instance of viewing, visual anamorphosis occurs. As exemplified by Lacan's reading of *The Ambassadors*, the effective break down of signification of everyday life is caused from a rupture, a stain on the misrecognized textual purchase on reality. Anamorphosis is this unrecognizable rupture, stain, or distortion, which makes visible the fragility of the symbolic system. The configuration of the photograph is still marked by two angles and three bodies, however, in this instance of viewing, imaginary identification is with the Iraqi man in the front right corner of the image, holding his hands up in triumph. In order for this shift in imaginary identification to occur, the viewer first misrecognizes the statue of Saddam Hussein, and re-signifies its presence as that of a statue with the face of the American flag, accentuating the persistence of American power in Iraq. Žižek argues, "with the anamorphic gaze literally, we are obliged to state that precisely by 'looking awry,' i.e., at an angle, we see the thing in its clear and distinct

form, in opposition to the 'straightforward' view that sees only an indistinct confusion."[126] In this way, the gaze operates as a crucial effect of anamorphosis.

Our viewpoint as subjects viewing the image is both supported and distorted by desire.[127] Furthermore, desire is always mediated by the Other, thus, between the object and the gaze, desire always intervenes.[128] In the case of the "Flagged Saddam" image, desire can be traced through the register of imaginary identification. The way in which we appear to ourselves as a nation is filtered through the fantasies and shifts that make us appear likable to ourselves as a nation. The flag appears as the *objet a* in both instances of the images as it is "always, by definition, perceived in a distorted way, because outside this distortion, in itself, it does not exist."[129] Since the *objet a* is nothing except when viewed from a certain perspective we can analyze the gaze as already filtered through the object cause of desire, allowing us to recognize ourselves as the Iraqi man, seven years after we had identified with the soldier. This brief misrecognition and then re-signification is the work of the anamorphic stain as it momentarily projects the gaze of the American viewer back onto themselves. This process makes visible a gap in the suturing of the symbolic structure, and consequently, their own place within the symbolic order. The misrecognition of our identification with the American soldier is resignified by the desire of the American viewer to appear likable, to rebuild the fantasy.

Thus, for the audience viewing the image in 2010, imaginary identification lies with the revolution of the Iraqi man. A notable shift in imaginary identification becomes apparent only when viewing the image in the contextual climate of 2003, and 2010. While the point of the gaze stays the same, our imaginary identification shifts from the American soldier to the Iraqi civilian. This shift is marked by the visual anamorphosis,

which takes place in the flag/mask/face of the statue. The gaze is captured in the specific point in the image where the American flag is tossed casually over across the face of the statue. Accordingly, the statue begins to act as though the American flag is its face, its unifying feature. In the realm of psychoanalysis, we are always operating within a scene of failed unicity.[130] Lacan emphasizes humanity's constant need for unicity and meaning with his description of the unary trait, which is, "the point of symbolic identification to which the real of the subject clings. As long as the subject is attached to this feature, we are faced with a charismatic, fascinating, sublime figure; as soon as this attachment is broken, the figure is deflated."[131] The face performs as a point of the body that is excessively symbolized. Thus, defacing the statue functions to disfigure not just the structure of the face, but the systems of representation that suture its meaning in the world. The absence of the Saddam's face in the first take on the image acts as the presence of the flag as the unitary 'face-like' feature in the second instance of the image. Thus, a trace of the Real emerges from the cracks of the symbolic and imaginary systems. This rupture, or anamorphic stain, entices the American audience viewing the photograph to see the flag as *always already* the unifying feature of the image. In this way, the image's meaning is juxtaposed from the first instance of the photograph's circulation as alternative to the beheaded statue of Saddam, the flag as face, rather than mask, functions to convey this image as one of American imperialism.

In 2013, the point of the gaze in the photograph, the flag, functions as a stain, a spot in the picture disturbing the transparent visibility of the image, and instituting a temporary split in our relationship to the picture. The re-suturing, the patching back together, the re-imagining of our national identity is visible only in the trace of the Real

that marks the shift in imaginary identification. Subsequently, in 2013, Americans identified—and *had always* identified—with the Iraqi man as the fantasy of imperialism and American freedom and democracy for all courses through our re-identification. Acknowledging that our communication is always mediated by the Other, desire from a Lacanian standpoint, can be understood as, "unconscious wishes of an individual that, by definition, cannot be satisfied."[132] The cause of this desire, the *objet a,* in both instances of the "Flagged Saddam" image functions as the ideal nation state, America. In this ideal nation state, exemplified in narratives of liberation, democracy is the unquestioned ideal. In all three instances of viewing, in 2003, 2010, and 2013, viewing is filtered through the desire for the desire of the Other. Desire makes the misrecognition clear as it re-sutures the narrative of American nobility and a pursuit of freedom as an American brand. Thus, this image indicates that our imaginary identification is mediated through narratives of American identity that are continuously re-written. Therefore, if war is signified as success, and this image stands in metonymically for a whole free Iraq, this type of imaginary identification operates through a nostalgic gaze which breeds justification to continuously liberate new Others, new objects, and in the process, constantly liberate ourselves.

In "A Decade of War: The Images That Moved Them Most," the Iraq war is commemorated through visual images which prompt viewers to add commentary producing seemingly polysemic responses. Through the open forum of the posting board, viewers are allowed to individually commemorate the images and discuss how they remember them throughout the course of the war. The content of the responses vary from shock to support. Descriptions range from, "sad and horrific", "powerful and moving",

and, “devastating” to “what a decade!”, “Stop blaming Bush” and “there has to be a way to end it.”[133] At surface level these comments may look disparate, however, they all have a distinctive commonality. They all comment on something in the past as though it is still the present. In this way, the image still, in 2013, generates a citizen-commemorator that views war commemoration as a perpetual, ceaseless process. Thus, the commentary produces a perennial tense of the “always will be” noting war as a necessity, and commemoration as the necessary means to constitute its value for and as citizens.

The 2013 circulation of “Flagged Saddam” is filtered through a lens of nostalgia, recreating the fantastical way in which American’s view Iraq. This lens is accentuated by the commemorative viewing mechanism in 2013. Previously, scholars have addressed the ways in which nostalgia operates as a relic of the past paired with an impossibility for unity in the community today.[134] The rhetoric of nostalgia works to create a notable break between ideal form and partial application. It marks a recognizable internal loss of virtue, which fails to be transferred from one generation to the next.[135] In this way, nostalgia creates an imagined narrative of what was and a current impossibility of what can never be again. The 2013 circulation of “Flagged Saddam” appears on a viewing mechanism only accessed online, as opposed to its previous circulations on daily news channels such as CNN, Fox, and NBC. “A Decade of War in Iraq: The Images That Moved Them Most” was the first instance of virtual-visual commemoration of the “Flagged Saddam” image with large numbers of viewers. The 2013 online viewing mechanism obfuscates the distance between the viewer and the Iraq War. *Time’s* “lightbox” contorts the viewing apparatus of the computer by becoming a full screen. In this viewing mode, 56 images of war are vividly displayed. The lightbox feature is controlled by arrows that can flip

backwards or forwards depicting the next or previous image. Much like a gallery at your fingertips, the lightbox allows the viewer time to take in each visual work before moving on to the next. The graphic depictions of a horrific war intensify in each image. Situated amongst other images of a gruesome war, "Flagged Saddam" functions as an ideal image of international unity. Amongst images of atrocity, "Flagged Saddam" evidences the justifications for war. Viewing this image through a nostalgic gaze, a fantastical narrative is again reconstructed as America remembers Iraq, and begins to investigate warrants to invade Syria in 2013.

Conclusions

This chapter addresses the way in which the gaze shapes and is shaped by the national imaginary which, in turn, structures the way images and perceptions of war are commemorated. The gaze functions as an anamorphic shift occurred between 2003 and 2010 allowing Americans who viewed the image in 2013 to believe that they *had always* identified with the Iraqi man. In the wake of national trauma, the national narrative was re-written between 2003 and 2010, noted by this anamorphic shift. Thus, it is the narrative's coherence in the face of contradiction that marks the force of desire. The unifying feature of the flag remains in both viewings as the gaze is filtered through the desire for democracy and the call to, again, unify. When commemoratively viewing "Flagged Saddam," the gaze is filtered through the theme of nostalgia. The rhetorical effect of nostalgia allows the citizen-commemorator to remember the war both individually and as a nation. While responses to the war may be varied, our need to remember, and thus, re-create these narratives of freedom and liberal democracy creates

the perennial gaze whereby war commemoration is a necessary process for the past, the present, and the future. Hence, through the past imperfective, war is continually re-made, re-told, and re-justified through the citizen-commemorator.

CHAPTER 5

THE OTHER IN US: CAPTURING THE AMERICAN IMAGINARY

"Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?"
The Star Spangled Banner
Francis Scott Key, 1814[136]

In 2003, one image captured what became the iconic moment of the American invasion of Iraq. Framed upwards in the backdrop of a blank visual field of clouds and sky, three men work in unity to take down the statue of dictator and known human rights violator, Saddam Hussein. Void of any other signs of debris, protests, riots, and other evidence of war's devastation, the image's empty backdrop allows the figural composition to resonate deeply in the viewer's consciousness. As though they are cast as characters in the unifying projection of the photograph, three men are staged equidistant from one another, captured in the perfect interlocutors of a triangle. Each character in this unifying feature has a distinctive role in the image. The soldier, posed halfway up the ladder, which rests on the statue of Saddam Hussein, assuredly looks off into the distance. The Iraqi man, stands with his hands raised and his mouth open as if caught in a moment of triumph. The last interlocutor of the triangle is not the soldier with his back turned, presumably putting the flag over the face of Saddam Hussein. As a result, the focus of the last part of the triangle are the bright hues of the American flag, which boldly covers the face of Saddam Hussein's towering statue. Soon after the fall of Baghdad, this image was one of the most circulated pictures of the Iraq War throughout the world.[137] The covering of the statue with the American flag and then impending fall of the statue quickly became

the dominant image of the day's news. "Flagged Saddam" was presented as a signifier of resolve, and American victory. Through its continued presence, it activated nationalism as a powerful mode of definition and identification for American viewers. Throughout the course of this project, I have argued that the "Flagged Saddam" image grounds national identity in citizen life by examining the citizenship roles of the citizen-liberator, the citizen-democratizer, and finally, the citizen-commemorator.

While Hariman and Lucaites discuss the way in which the iconic photograph becomes re-appropriated to re-ignite national allegiance, they do not, however, theorize the means by which the same exact image can be registered differently at different moments in time. To make this case, this project unfolded in three parts. Accordingly, I analyzed the exact same image, "Flagged Saddam", at three moments of uptick: in 2003, 2010, and 2013.

Summary

In the first analysis chapter, this project examined the image and circulation of "Flagged Saddam" in 2003, at the apex of the Iraq War. In the 2003 instance of viewing, at the start of a very supported "Operation Iraqi Freedom," I argued that the American public identified with the plight of the American soldier as he becomes the national symbol of a citizen-liberator. I used Ariella Azoulay's notion of "Emergency Claims"[138] to argue that the shared history of struggle for freedom between Iraqi citizens and American citizens prompted undeniable action from the American audience as they saw themselves as citizen-liberators. Through its circulated presence in the consciousness of the American public, "Flagged Saddam" activated a powerful mode of national

identification as the call for liberation brought about waves of social and financial support from American support groups. Hence, in 2003 “Flagged Saddam” concretized abstract notions of citizenship and anonymous citizen-action through its figural representation of national unification in the form of liberation.

The narrative of American morality and integrity unraveled as pictures surfaced verifying American’s participation in the torture of Iraqis at Abu Ghraib. As support for the war declined, “Flagged Saddam” reappeared in 2010 to help Americans, again, make sense of the war and re-suture the American narrative of benevolence. Thus, in this project’s third chapter, I focused on how, in 2010, viewers identified more with the Iraqi man in the image. I argued that after experiencing the trauma of their national narrative coming apart, Americans identified with the struggle of the Iraqi people in order to re-suture anew the national imaginary. In this take, I argued that Americans saw themselves as citizen-democratizers, hoping to empower the Iraqi people with the agency to govern themselves. In this way, the labor of the image was projected as a communal effort. In particular, the Iraqi man, arms up, mouth open, symbolized the ideals of liberal democracy that the American public could identify with. In this instance of viewing, the image is specifically void of any traces of conflict. Instead, military occupation is obfuscated by the figural composition of three citizens all working together for a common victory: that of democracy. Thus, the model of civic action put into place in the 2010 viewing extends beyond the war to encapsulate the ideals of a democratic republic, which, again, justified the war effort.

In my last chapter, I focus on the image’s most recent uptick in circulation, in 2013. This image, most currently, is circulated through a commemorative viewing

mechanism in *Time Magazine's* 2013 online gallery. I argued that the force of the image is drawn from a third focal point of the photograph: the flag covering the face of the statue of Saddam Hussein. I addressed the way in which the gaze is always filtered through the role of the national imaginary. Focusing on the shifts from one point of identification to the next, this chapter maps the way in which the force of our desire to be a unified, whole, benevolent nation, actually reunites the fraying strands of our nation's narrative. I argued that at this point, in 2013, Americans have shifted their focus onto the flag as they have shifted toward a commemorative orientation to the war. If we understand commemorative formations as Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott illustrate, "(they) implicate a society's common interests, investments, or destinies, with profound political implications" then the commemoration of "Flagged Saddam" significantly marks the point at which memory becomes public as viewers look beyond their personal experiences to engage in a communal interpretation of the past.[139] While the 2013 visual-virtual commemoration included an online forum, citizen-commemorators commentary evoked the effect of nostalgia. Coating the war in a shroud of cynicism and necessity, the citizen-commemorators viewed war as perennial. In this way, "Flagged Saddam" continues to enact civic identity and ideals of citizenship for future generations.

Theoretical Implications

Taken together, viewings of the iconic photograph, "Flagged Saddam," seem to create a container of American reactions as it continually re-creates the means by which American's can be cast as benevolent characters in a narrative of victory, honor, and

national duty. As Hariman and Lucaites state, the significance of iconic photographs is, "not because of their fixed meaning, but because of the way they coordinate available structures of identification within a performative space open and continued to varied articulation."[140] Accordingly, then, "Flagged Saddam" can be understood as empty of political instructions. Instead, this analysis has shown that as a vessel empty of meaning, "Flagged Saddam" is continually filled with the necessary fantasy that the current situation requires.

This conviction, however, should not be taken lightly. Analyzing the same iconic image at three different points in time, this project addresses the way in which one visual image operated as a significant tool in the democratic process over the course of ten years. The force of the American public's desire to re-connect, re-suture, and close the narrative of the Iraqi war appears in the shifts in identification within "Flagged Saddam" over the course of ten years. Thus, by continually creating a necessary fiction in focusing on the liberation, democratization, and commemoration of this singular iconic image of war, we create new myths that (re)provide a sense of closure. This closure allows us to believe, yet again, in the democratic process. This analysis expands Hairman and Lucaites's notions of the iconic photograph by viewing one specific image at three different points in time. The shifts noted in the brief instance of time encapsulated in this analysis address a need for more attention to be paid to the intricacies of the iconic photograph. Due to its ability to activate nationalism, identification, and definition, this analysis has shown that the iconic photograph's material effects are prominent in the creation of policy and support for war. Thus, this project demonstrated that visual rhetoric not only plays a significant role in democratic processes and ideologies, but it also expounds that the

democratic process, by way of the national imaginary, is both constructed and constrained by the visual.

Looking Forward

As Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt have been the latest to remind us, we live in a constant state of war.[141] In effect, the formation of the sovereign State not only accelerates and aggravates war between States, it views perpetual warfare as the condition of internal peace.[142] Thus, we need to begin looking at the means by which the State "predicated its status on the appropriation of lawful violence that demanded a constant state of internal war to secure its monopoly of force against all forms of transgression, succession, resistance, indifference, and dissent."[143] This project has analyzed the role of visual images as rhetorical devices, which both mediate and produce knowledge about war. In a constant state of warfare, citizens are continually thrown into a crisis of national identity. Through just one image of war, "Flagged Saddam," addresses the means by which circulation of discourse affects how we see ourselves as citizens. This project analyzed American national identity as the imaginary unity that decomposes and regenerates through war commemoration in the form of *Time's* visual images. Thus, this project hinges on the relationship between visual rhetoric, public opinion, and international policy as entities, which are formed by and through a national imaginary.

Using just one image from *Time's* archive I have traced the way in which imaginary identification altered over the course of ten years of war. The plummeting support for the war is not tied to any singular factor, but numerous social and political articulations throughout the course of ten years. As an integral process of mediated war

coverage, visual images of war assist in creating a national imaginary and ideas of national citizenship. The way in which visual culture circulates and signifies during war is a reflection of the way our national imaginary is broken apart *and* put back together. The purpose of this analysis is to mark the means by which imaginary identification functions as a modality that re-sutures the fantasy structure that protects us from the atrocious realities of war. Further, national identification allows us to appear likable to ourselves as good citizens even though it may not be possible to be a holistically altruistic nation. Thus, imaginary identification is intricately linked to justification of war in a broader national imaginary. In the instance of the "Flagged Saddam" photograph, the rhetoric that both constructs and anchors the image operates differently in three different moments in time, throughout the span of ten years. In this way, the American citizen who views the image is not different, rather, desire that filtrates the gaze is directed in different ways. Ultimately, this project links the means by which we commemorate war to our current justifications for invasion.

NOTES

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[11] Ibid, 100.
[12] Ibid, 103.
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[36] Ibid, 57.
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[39] Ibid, 100.
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Moreover, Charles Stewart's also focused on the confrontational methodology used in Stokely Carmichael's rhetoric of black power. These examples illustrate the shift that studies of nationalism took to focus in on minority studies in 1960s.

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