

“MEXICO’S DRUG WAR, FEMINIZED”: VISUALIZING MEMORY AND NATION  
IN *NEW YORK TIMES* PHOTOJOURNALISM

by

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“Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized”: Visualizing Memory and Nation in *New York Times*

Photojournalism

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Lisa Flores

This MA thesis proposes a rhetorical analysis of Katie Orlinsky’s photojournalism piece entitled “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” that was published in the *New York Times* in 2011. The analysis of this text will explore rhetorical intersections between the visual, memory, nation, and narrative. More specifically, in this analysis I engage (visual) rhetorical criticism and narrative criticism to address (1) how this photojournalistic piece rhetorically constructions visual gendered narratives and (2) how these narratives participate in processes of collective memory and thus the theorizing of nation. I therefore use visual rhetoric scholarship and narrative criticism to not only analyze the text throughout this thesis, but also to situate it within larger sociocultural discourses, memory processes, and the theorizing of nation.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Beginning in the 1930s, America underwent a cultural shift towards the visual in which the methods for documenting social conditions became increasingly pictorial, and photographs went from being considered purely aesthetic to socially significant (Finnegan, 2003). Because of their expanding usage and social significance, rhetoricians have increasingly turned their attention to the visual with particular emphasis on photography (e.g. Cloud, 2004; Finnegan, 2003; Gronnvoll, 2007; Hariman & Lucaites, 2007). The transition away from the aesthetic to documenting and reporting on events and social conditions (i.e. photojournalism) in addition to the realism of photographs gives them a general presumption of being objective representations of historical fact (Finnegan, 2003; Zelizer, 2001; see also Rawlinson, 2009). As noted by Perlmutter (1998), “the veridicality and verisimilitude of those (press) images are rarely doubted. No one looks at a news photograph and thinks ‘that’s just his opinion’” (p. 3). Far from being purely objective, photojournalistic practices and images are shaped by economic, political, and cultural factors. Finnegan (2003) also argues for the deeply rhetorical nature of documentary photography and thus photojournalism when she states, “documentary photographs are not merely ‘evidence’, but are by their very nature rhetorical” (p. xv). Thus photographs that are reproduced by the mainstream news media do not necessarily bear a likeness to the reality that they supposedly refer back to and are therefore ‘re-presentations’ instead of representations.

Ultimately, given the proliferation of the news and increasingly visual nature of their stories, contemporary photojournalism is a prime site for rhetorical inquiry.

As a site for rhetorical inquiry, photojournalism has spurred much rhetorical scholarship that is motivated by questions of nation and memory (see Finnegan, 2003; Hariman & Lucaites, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2007; Lucaites & Hariman, 2001; Zelizer, 2001, 2004). As the literature review will address in greater depth, visual rhetorical scholarship that examines photojournalism is largely concerned with issues of nation and memory because the images that comprise mainstream photojournalistic narratives are part of larger socio-cultural archives that people collectively (re)construct and engage while making sense of who they are (and are not) on individual and macro societal levels (see Hariman & Lucaites, 2007; Owen & Ehrenhaus, 2010; Zelizer, 2004). These photographs thus rhetorically function across time such that they have implications for memory processes of remembering and forgetting that shape how collectives come to understand nation. In describing the rhetorically potent slippage across time of photojournalistic images, Hariman and Lucaites (2007) state, “More than just a representation of our past, it collapses past and present to create a structure of feeling” (p. 60). In sum, rhetorical work that engages photojournalism must also turn to issues of memory and nation in order to truly explicate how this medium rhetorically functions.

With these points of rhetorical and contemporary significance in mind, this thesis examines the intersections between visual rhetoric, memory, and nation by analyzing an online photo slideshow from the *New York Times*’ “Mexican Drug Trafficking (Mexico’s Drug War)” online archive. Specifically, the *New York Times* piece that this thesis offers a rhetorical criticism of is entitled “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” and is a collection of 20 slides that contain various black and white photographs and accompanying captions about incarcerated Mexican



women (see Orlinsky, 2011a).<sup>1</sup> Within the mainstream American news media, the *New York Times* has a long history of engaging the visual and has done so since the aforementioned cultural turn towards pictorial engagement of the 1930s (Berger, 1951; see also Finnegan, 2003). In more recent years, the *New York Times* has devoted considerable amounts of coverage to Mexico's Drug War. As mentioned, the *Times* has an online archive of its articles, photographs, and other features that contains one section entitled "Mexican Drug Trafficking (Mexico's Drug War)" (see "Mexican Drug Trafficking," 2012). This section contains over 1,000 articles that date back to the early 1990s, which are reflective of more contemporary trends in coverage of Mexican and Mexican/American affairs from the perspective of a major Western news outlet (see "Mexican Drug Trafficking," 2012). While it is important to note that Drug War coverage is only one piece of the much larger complex web of news media coverage of Mexican and Mexican/American affairs within the *New York Times* (see "Mexican Drug Trafficking," 2012), the magnitude of this section is not negligible and it has demonstrated lively participation in more recent U.S.-Mexico geopolitical discourses.

Within this complex web of news coverage, what distinguishes Orlinsky's (2011a) piece from other coverage is that it foregrounds gender. The majority of coverage pertaining to Mexican and Mexican/America affairs centers on illegal drugs and migrant workers (Andreas, 1996; Payan, 2006), in which men are the primary characters and thus their gender roles assume a background, normative position within the larger storylines.<sup>2</sup> For example, within the "Mexican Drug Trafficking (Mexico's Drug War)" archive, a search for articles containing the words 'woman' or 'women' yielded less than 100 hits, meaning less than 10% of the articles within this collection contain explicit references to this gender group (see *New York Times*, 2012). A search for the word 'she' or 'her' yielded slightly better results with around 200 hits,

but ‘he’ yielded over 800 hits, still indicating that women do not have as strong an *explicit* presence as men in much of the *Times*’ Drug War coverage (see *New York Times*, 2012).

I argue that the nature of Orlinsky’s (2011a) piece of photojournalism, as that which draws attention to a gender that otherwise plays a largely invisible or secondary role in the context of the Drug War, makes this text a rhetorically significant re-presentation of the Drug War and a text apt for the task of exploring the aforementioned rhetorical intersections between the visual, memory, and nation. The gendered significance of Orlinsky’s (2011a) piece not only sets it apart from other mainstream American media Drug War coverage, but it invokes gendered reporting conventions that shape how people come to understand issues of nation that mark collective memory. As explained by Jacobs (2010), women’s bodies in this sense are used as the “dramatic vehicle” (p. 44) through which narratives of a nation in crisis are told. These often-visual, gendered narratives are circulated and appropriated across time such that they invoke other collective memory artifacts and processes (see Hariman & Lucaites, 2003). Put simply, although mainstream American coverage of the Drug War largely places women in a background or supporting position, gendered depictions and specifically re-presentations of women’s bodies, such as those of Orlinsky’s (2011a) “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized,” have an extensive history of appropriation in the context of theorizing of nation and collective memory as it pertains to cultural stories of crisis (see Del Zotto, 2002; Jacobs, 2010; Zelizer, 2001). Thus, this text calls for the rhetorical critic to look at the intersections of the visual, memory, and nation while being perceptive to the ways in which gender shape the contours of this nexus.

In order to begin explicating these intersections and establish a framework for this piece of rhetorical criticism, it is necessary to address relevant literature while devoting particular attention to visual rhetoric, the keystone of this analysis. The following section reviews visual

rhetoric scholarship and specifically focuses on that within visual rhetoric that attends to question of identity and memory. These areas of focus not only comprise the majority of contemporary visual rhetorical scholarship, but this review highlights a gap in this scholarship that calls for a different conceptualization of collective memory from that which is currently being utilized by the majority of scholars within this field. After outlining the collective memory approach that I argue furthers visual rhetoric scholarship, or that of Olick's (2007) process-relational collective memory, I also attend to the ways in which the aforementioned literature directly relates to another node of interest in this analysis—theorizing of nation. Collectively, the following section therefore offers a literature review that (1) sketches visual rhetoric scholarship as a body of work that is currently driven by questions of identity and memory; (2) outlines the way in which this scholarship's theorizing of collective memory differs from a process-relational approach; and (3) explicates the way in which rhetoricians' understanding of memory and theorizing of nation as manifest in the visual (i.e. the intersections around which this thesis revolves) could be nuanced by adoption of a more thoroughly process-relational orientation to memory.

### **Literature Review**

While in some ways rhetoricians have always been interested in issues of image (see Gronbeck, 2008; Kjeldsen, 2003; Olson, Finnegan, & Hope, 2008), much contemporary rhetorical scholarship is attending to the proliferation and increasing socio-cultural importance of the visual (Olson, 2007; see also Birdsell & Groarke, 1996; Finnegan, 2004). With its roots in the great breadth of scholarship that is rhetoric and because the visual can encompass a diversity of mediums, visual rhetoric scholarship has taken up both a variety of texts and theoretical orientations (see Olson, 2007; Rice, 2004). Within this developing body of rhetorical scholarship

there is significant attention to photography and photojournalism (e.g., Booth & Davisson, 2008; Cloud, 2004; Demo, 2007; Finnegan, 2000, 2003; Hariman & Lucaites, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2007; Harold & DeLuca, 2005). The interest in photojournalism is largely spawned from a scholarly shift in studying images in isolation to studying the contexts in which they appear more holistically (Zelizer, 2004); Zelizer (2004) explains this move and states, “Much recent scholarship has been drawn to the place at which words and images meet, arguing side by side the cogent dimensions of each representational template emerge” (p. 158). Because photojournalism by its very nature involves images interwoven with words, it is a prime text for recent visual rhetoric scholarship.

Rhetoricians studying photographs and photojournalism have long theorized that these images work through the interplay of two messages—one denotative and the other connotative (Barthes, 1977a, 1977b; Zelizer, 2004). This understanding stems largely from Barthes’ (1977a, 1977b) *Image-Music-Text*, which is rooted in the semiotic tradition (see Craig & Muller, 2007). The denotative message is taken as the literal and direct representation. Zelizer (2004) explains: “Also called the image’s indexicality or referentiality, by which an image appears to capture life on its own terms, the power to represent is established through the assumption of a correspondence with real life events” (p. 159). The denotative message is therefore evoked by photography’s uncanny ability to seemingly arrest and reproduce real world moments. The connotative message on the other hand is symbolic, and “the image in this regard is assumed capable of invoking and repairing to broad symbolic systems that draw on certain meanings for the visual representations that are displayed” (Zelizer, 2004, p. 159). The connotative message therefore taps into larger meaning structures, which are often normative and ideologically laden.

While in no image are the connotative and denotative messages thought to be mutually exclusive, Barthes (1977a) argues that these messages contain a particularly special relationship in photography, which he refers to as “the photographic paradox” (pp. 16-17). The photographic paradox is not merely the idea that photographs contain a connotative and denotative message, but that the rhetoric of the photograph develops from a message without a code (Barthes, 1977a; Zelizer, 2004). To quote Barthes (1977a) at length:

The photographic paradox can then be seen as the coexistence of two messages, the one without a code (the photographic analogue), the other with a code (the ‘art’, or the treatment, or the ‘writing’, or the rhetoric of the photograph); structurally, the paradox is clearly not the collusion of a denoted and a connoted message [...], it is that here the connoted (or coded) message develops on the basis of a message *without a code*. (Emphasis Barthes’, p. 17)

This semiotic analysis of photographic messages does not appear explicitly in much contemporary visual rhetorical work on photography, but it does serve as a base for understanding photographic messages within visual rhetoric scholarship and furthers the argument that photographs are by no means univocal in the messages they forward and arguments they make.<sup>3</sup>

Although images have a potentiality for polysemy, this does not mean that they can have any argument imposed upon them at will by the viewer, but that just like a written text, images can be multilayered in terms of their meanings, messages, and arguments (see Birdsell & Groarke, 1996; Blair, 1996). As stated by Birdsell and Groarke (1996), “Visual images can, of course, be vague and ambiguous. But this alone does not distinguish them from words and sentences, which can also be vague and ambiguous” (p. 2). How the visual works argumentatively (or does not work) has been the topic of much debate amongst rhetoricians and argumentation scholars (see *Argumentation and Advocacy*’s 1996 summer and fall editions), specifically in terms of (1) whether or not it can be said to function the same way(s) as words or

in its own unique manner, and (2) whether or not visual communication and visual rhetoric theories can borrow from traditions that have previously been limited to that which is verbal and/or written or if their theories need be unique to the visual (see Birdsell & Groarke, 2007; Blair, 1996; Kenney, 2002; Finnegan, 2001b; Gross, 2009; Hatfield, Hink, & Birkholt, 2007; Kjeldsen, 2007; Olson, 2007). As illustrated by Olson's (2007) extensive review of visual rhetoric scholarship, "Intellectual and Conceptual Resources for Visual Rhetoric: A Re-examination of Scholarship Since 1950," much work has been done on both sides of the fence in terms of drawing on traditional rhetorical theory and building new theory in addition to generating a plethora of "conceptually-driven case studies of historically-situated events, featuring a particular medium and typically concerning a twentieth-century controversy or technology" (p. 7).

From this basic understanding of how images work, contemporary visual rhetoric scholars that critique and theorize about photography and photojournalism at the intersection of traditional and new rhetorical theory are largely motivated by questions of identity and memory (see Lucaites & Hariman, 2001; Olson, 2007). Questions of identity and memory drive this scholarship because of the ways in which the photograph has historically been theorized, circulated, and appropriated in American culture (see Smith, 1999). As this section describes, the photograph is commonly presumed to have an inherent truth-value, and thus it has been theorized as an encapsulation of one's interiority (and circulated as such across time) in addition to being used to construct archives of various identities (see Smith, 1999). Through memory processes, such as those of remembering and forgetting, these images and archives are invoked and reconstructed along with cultural understandings of identity (Smith, 1999). The following discussion of literature is thus designed to speak into current conversations that are not only

dominating this area of the field, but are also of particular relevance given the text this thesis analyzes.

Visual rhetoric scholarship that engages issues of identity is largely motivated by questions of how the visual participates in the construction and reconstruction of identity (i.e. in this case, is there something unique about the way photography and/or photojournalism engages issues of identity as opposed to or in combination with other mediums) and how visual constructions of identity mediate between the individual and the collective. In investigating these questions, rhetoricians and other scholars who have turned to photography and photojournalism frequently discuss the presumed truth-value socially granted to photographs and how this truth-value facilitates inferences about the individual and collective.

As stated, the presumed truth-value that is socially granted to photographs is one of the most widely theorized concepts in visual rhetoric and other disciplines that engage photography and photojournalism (see Atkinson, 2011; Barbatsis, 1996; Batler-Reitz & Stewart, 2006; Finn, 2010; Finnegan, 2001a, 2001b, 2003; Perlmutter, 1998; Rawlinson, 2009; Schwartz, 1999; Zelizer, 2001, 2004). In their work on visual argumentation, Batler-Reitz and Stewart (2006) state, “Despite awareness by contemporary audiences that technology may be used to manipulate photographs, audiences seem willing to believe what they see” (p. 118). This ‘willingness to believe’ is facilitated by the pictorial realism of photography, or the way in which photographs possess a mirror-like ability to re-present, and the nature of photographic production itself (Barbatsis, 1996; Batler-Reitz & Stewart, 2006; Crary, 1990; Del Zotto, 2002; Finnegan, 2001b). Furthermore, photographic technologies and the nature of photographic production have created a cultural link between observation and “truth” (Crary, 1990; Finnegan, 2001b). The connection between observation and a seemingly inherent truth-value “establishes a sense of having-been-

there or the this-has-been, which other forms of representation cannot” (Finn, 2010, p. 42). This means based on the very nature of the medium, photographs have a potentiality to collapse the ‘truths’ from firsthand observation and observation of re-presentations and/or representations.

While the presumed truth-value is a common and important dimension of how photographs are socially perceived, this is neither a static nor uniform property across all photographs. As stated by Finn (2010), “truthfulness of a given image is produced through a confluence of forces, including the context of use, its formal and technical properties and its cultural status, including its histories of use” (p. 40). Just as photographs themselves, and particularly photojournalistic images, are shaped by technological, economic, political, and cultural factors, so too is the presumed truth-value they are imbued with.

Based on the presumed truth-value photographs are commonly granted in American culture, photographs have historically been theorized as tangible encapsulations of one’s interiority (Smith, 1999; see also S. Parry-Giles, 2000). Almost a century prior to the visual turn of the 1930s, early forms of photography, such as daguerreotypy, were being used to create portraits that functioned as gendered, racialized, and classed elements of larger social archives of American identity (Smith, 1999). In her analysis of these early archives, Smith (1999) states, “The photographic archive generated and maintained essentialized discourses of interior character, and trained observers in how to read the body for the signs of a knowable interiority” (p. 4). In this sense photographs have been seen as a medium that can pierce through one’s exterior representations and re-present elements of one’s interior essence or “true” self.

Photographs have not only been theorized as a medium that can visually and rhetorically (re)construct one’s interiority, but they have also functioned as re-presentations of cultural and social “types” (see Smith, 1999). Photographic archives have allowed for the processes of



categorizing and cataloging the visual such that the identity of the individual loses meaning amongst the masses and “types” are argued to emerge (Smith, 1999; see also Rawlinson, 2009; Sekula, 1986). Throughout history this visual composite work has been used as the basis for racist, classist, and sexist arguments about biological “types” of people (Smith, 1999). For the purposes of my proposed analysis, it is important to note that the scholarship that theorizes about truth-value argues that portraiture photography can socially operate on two different levels—the individual photograph can be seen as a window to one’s interiority or true identity, while the same photographs en masse can be culturally conceived of as a window to identities or “types” of people at large (Smith, 1999).

Visual rhetoric scholarship motivated by questions of identity has also theorized about the way the visual can mediate between the identity of the individual and the collective or larger socio-cultural groups (see Hariman & Lucaites, 2001, 2003; Edwards & Winkler, 1997; Finnegan, 2003). This scholarship has not only generated rhetorical terms that are specific to the functioning of the visual, such as ‘individuated aggregate’ (Hariman & Lucaites, 2001, 2003; Lucaites, 1997), ‘visual synecdoche’ (Finnegan, 2003), and ‘representative character’ (Edwards & Winkler, 1997), but it has also developed the following assertions: (1) an individual can be used to stand in for a larger socio-cultural group or “depict a condition requiring collective action” (Hariman & Lucaites, 2001, p. 17); (2) not only can depictions of individuals function synecdochically, but depictions of objects can too (Finnegan, 2003); and (3) depictions of individuals can be removed from their immediate visual context and reappropriated over time in other contexts such that “through a cumulative process of visual and symbolic meaning, [the depiction] rhetorically identifies and delineates the ideals of the body politic” (Edwards & Winkler, 1997, p. 296). Collectively these assertions posit that depictions of individuals are not

only able to transverse individual and collective representational boundaries, but they are also able to do so across time, accumulating meaning as they circulate and are reappropriated.

In summary, visual rhetoric scholarship that is motivated by questions of identity has not only engaged traditional rhetorical theory in an effort to demonstrate its applicability to the visual, but it has also generated new theory that is tailored to the visual. While this is a growing body of scholarship that addresses a variety of visual texts, the unique rhetorical and socio-cultural properties of photography (and photojournalism) make it a prime medium for contemporary inquiry. Most importantly, this scholarship has contributed to an understanding of the ways in which photographs, as rhetorical texts, are uniquely able to mediate between the individual and the collective with respect to identity.

Questions of identity in visual rhetoric scholarship are often interwoven with and inextricably bound to questions of memory. Rhetorical scholars who investigate questions of memory in regards to the visual, and specifically photography, have largely turned to photojournalism for ways to theorize about the relationship between photographs and collective memory. First and foremost, visual rhetoric scholars that address memory have argued that the visual is inherently rooted in “the culture of memory” (Drechsel, 2010, p. 7; see also Assman & Czaplicka, 1995; Biesecker, 2002; Edwards & Winkler, 1997; Hariman & Lucaites, 2003, 2007).<sup>4</sup> The ‘culture of memory’ in this sense is taken to include the artifacts of a culture’s knowledge, such as photographs, that are preserved, reconstructed, circulated, and drawn upon for the purposes of “deriv[ing] an awareness of its unity and peculiarity” (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995, p. 130). In essence the culture of memory is that which “creates a framework for communication across the abyss of time” (Assman, 2008, p. 97),<sup>5</sup> and the visual—by its very nature—is fundamentally a part of this framework in that it can transcend its immediate temporal

context while being accessed by a culture to facilitate their collective sense making. A theoretical construct used to describe various visual texts ‘rooted-ness’ in memory is that of depictive rhetoric (see Edwards & Winkler, 1997). For example, in their analysis of political cartoons, Edwards and Winkler (1997) quote the work of Michael Osborn to define depictive rhetoric as the images “that linger in the collective memory of audiences as representative of their subjects when rhetoric has been successful” (p. 293). This rhetorical relationship between the visual and memory is thus one of the very things that allows some visuals to function as bridges between the past and present and between individual and collective memory.

Following this line of argumentation and further establishing the relationship between the visual and memory, rhetoricians have conceived of visual artifacts as “memory texts” (Biesecker, 2002, p. 394). These texts are rhetorical in nature and tap into the assumption that underlies much of this work that “what we remember and how we remember it can tell us something significant about who we are as a people now, about the contemporary social and political issues that divide us, and about who we may become” (Biesecker, 2002, p. 406). These texts can also include iconic photography, which participates in the very processes that Hariman and Lucaites (2003) point to in terms of the creation of collective memory—“collective memory is created through the extended circulation and appropriation of images over time” (p. 38). In terms of memory texts there can be a slippage across time, and their rhetorical function is never static; as discussed by Hariman and Lucaites (2003) and stated by Biesecker (2002), “Just as important as recognizing that collective memory is rhetorical is recognizing that the kind of rhetorical work particular memory texts do is not determined in advance” (p. 406). For example, Biesecker (2002) examines memory texts ranging from a blockbuster movie to a *New York Times* bestseller to argue that the way we remember WWII reflects a particular politics that is by no means an

inevitable result of the happenings of WWII. Memory texts thus speak of the intimate relationship between identity and memory in addition to centering issues that pertain to the theorizing of nation.

Building on the idea of memory texts, the visual has also been theorized as a sense-making tool for contemporary American public and civic identity that operates by participating in collective memory (Biesecker, 2002; see also Hariman & Lucaites, 2007; Owen & Ehrenhaus, 2010). One way the visual has been theorized as a sense-making tool regards what Owen and Ehrenhaus (2010) refer to as “communities of memory” (p. 132). In this case the visual functions as “evidence of the entanglements of cultural memory, where memory is conceived as a site of struggle, a dynamic field of competing and intersecting meanings and discourses, constructed by diverse publics, and articulated through varied media and texts” (Owen & Ehrenhaus, 2010, p. 133). Hariman and Lucaites have also extensively theorized about the visual and collective memory within contemporary American public/civic culture (see Hariman & Lucaites, 2003, 2007; Lucaites & Hariman, 2001). For example, in their analysis of the Vietnam era photograph of “accidental napalm,” Hariman and Lucaites (2003) argue that the photograph embodies a “continuing tension within public memory between a liberal-individualist narrative of denial and compensation and a mode of democratic dissent” (p. 38). As was the case in regards to the visual and identity, rhetoricians have engaged questions of memory to theorize about the visual as a medium able to mediate between individual and collective dimensions of society.

Considering memory in relation to the photograph and photojournalism also complicates our understanding of how the image works more generally and introduces a third type of meaning or message. While once again this understanding of how the image works is rooted in Roland Barthes’ (1977c) *Image-Music-Text*, it is much less widely discussed due to its high level

of abstraction (Zelizer, 2004). This third force, or Barthes' (1977c) "third meaning," is what "compels viewers after they encounter and deplete both its [the image's] literal/informational side and its symbolic dimensions" (Zelizer, 2004, p. 159). I bring up the third meaning in regards to memory, because as argued by Zelizer (2004), "it may be that in memory images need more than their indicative and symbolic dimensions and depend on the successful activation of that third meaning to which Barthes refers" (p. 160). In this sense, understanding the interplay of photographs within memory processes may call for the rhetorician to not only attend to the rhetorical function of the assumed truth-value put forth by the denotative force of photography, as has largely already been done, but to also attend to the rhetorical workings of contingency.

As evident from this literature review, contemporary visual rhetoric scholarship, and particularly that which turns to the photograph and photojournalism, is motivated by questions of identity and memory, which also have great relevance to the theorizing of nation. What is lacking from this literature is a thoroughly process-relational conceptualization of memory that speaks across all of the aforementioned intersections. As highlighted by Zelizer (2004), "For as long as collective memory has been an area of scholarly concern, the precise role of images as its vehicle has been asserted rather than explicated" (p. 157). By transitioning from a more static understanding of memory as a 'thing' to memory as both processual and relational, I argue that the rhetorically significant intersections of identity, memory, and nation as manifest in the visual can be more fully explicated and understood by rhetoric scholars.

A process-relational conceptualization of memory is not only relevant to this analysis for the way in which it integrates a variety of rhetorical constructs that have been touched upon, such as identity, within a larger theoretical framework, but it also forwards a more nuanced understanding of these constructs in relation to one another. The multifold framework that I will

be engaging in my analysis is that of Olick's (2007) 'process-relational' memory (p. 90). Conceiving of memory as process-relational draws attention to the fluidity and relationality between the concepts of field (i.e. contexts, configurations, networks, etc.), medium (i.e. fluid representational forms), genre, and profile (i.e. "the unique contours, more or less smooth, of political meaning systems at given points in time" (p. 108)). This understanding of memory as process is undergirded by three primary assumptions, which pertain to memory's multifold nature, externality, and relationality respectively (see Olick, 2003, 2007; Olick & Robbins, 1998).

One of the first assumptions undergirding the concept of memory as process, is that memory is not a singular entity (Casey, 2004; Olick & Robbins, 1998; Zelizer, 1995). As stated by Olick and Robbins (1998), "memory is a process, not a thing, and it works differently at different points in time" (p. 122; see also Zelizer, 1995). This not only speaks to the fact that scholars have come up with a wide variety of theoretical frameworks and terminology to refer to various "types" of memory, but also that, differing schemas aside, memory's very nature makes it multifold. Furthermore, the use of a multifold conceptualization to discuss collective memory allows for "varieties of collective remembering without the reification, hypostatization, and overtotalization attached to much previous use of the term" (Olick, 2007, p. 91). By acknowledging that memory is multifold, processual, and fluid, memory is not something this thesis merely nods to, but memory becomes a lynchpin of the larger analysis.

A second assumption is that memory is not confined to the mind (Casey, 2004; Olick, 2007; Olick & Robbins, 1998; see also Blair, 2006). By freeing memory from the confines of the mind, the potentiality for memory as material is opened up. In many ways this is not a novel idea because the externalization of memory has long been present "in the form of storytelling and

transmitted patterns of behavior” (Olick, 2007, p. 87). Most importantly, the acknowledgment of “external loci” (Olick, 2007, p. 87) of memory facilitates a greater understanding of the ways texts like the photos this thesis studies engage in the social dimensions of memory.

The third and potentially most significant argument in regards to its implications for this study is that collective memory is inextricably connected to issues of identity, narrative, and nation (Olick & Robbins, 1998; see also Olick, 2007). More explicitly, the stories we tell and consume on individual and social levels to make sense of our identities have been theorized in connection to various conceptualizations of collective memory because of the way in which these stories are able to fluidly move across time and be appropriated in a variety of contexts through memory processes like that of remembering and forgetting (see Olick & Robbins, 1998). As stated by Olick and Robbins (1998), “Memory is a central, if not the central, medium through which identities are constituted” (p. 133). Not only is memory a medium for the constituting of identities, but it is also a tool “for articulating national boundaries and establishing the legitimacy [or lack thereof] of national principles” (Olick, 2007, p. 86). Owen and Ehrenhaus (2010) also argue that memory and nation have important connections, and state, “The contours of cultural memory offer insight into the dynamics of a society’s ideological contestation over ‘concepts of the nation’” (pp. 133-134). Furthermore, issues of identity, and nation by extension, often necessitate attention to narrative; quoting the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, Olick and Robbins (1998) state, “all attempts to elucidate the notion of personal identity [and, by extension, group identity] independently of and in isolation from the notions of narrative [...] are bound to fail” (p. 122). In many ways these excerpts all point to narrative as both a bridging tool and way to elucidate critical connections between the concepts this thesis speaks to, such as memory (as process-relational) and theorizing of nation.

## Methods

I argue that in order to explicate (as opposed to merely assert) the way in which the visual, theorizing of nation, and a process-relational understanding of memory are imbricated, one needs to turn to narrative theory. In this sense, narrative theory is a methodological tool for productively reading across the intersections between the aforementioned constructs and disentangling *how* they are articulated rather than just mapping said articulations.

Narratives are a widely explored communication phenomenon. While some scholars view narration as a universal or paradigm of human communication (e.g., Barthes, 1977a; Fisher, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1989), other scholars argue that narrative can be an incredibly fruitful theory, but it cannot productively be applied to every aspect of human communication (e.g., Rowland, 1987, 1989).<sup>6</sup> In terms of this divide, I acknowledge that narrative plays an immense role in human communication and sense-making, but I agree with Rowland (1987) that if everything is considered narration, “the term loses much of its explanatory power” (p. 265), and furthermore, “a critical perspective that defines narrative too broadly may in some cases obscure, not reveal, the real importance of storytelling” (p. 268). Therefore, when I engage the terms ‘narrative’, ‘narration’, and other various derivatives, I am not referring to an all-encompassing paradigm, but I am instead describing a particular type of communication phenomenon that revolves around a particular discursive (not in the purely linguistic sense, but more broadly as to accommodate engagement with the visual) set of forms and functions, such as a specific sequence/arrangement, or plot, and the construction of characters (see Lucaites & Condit, 1985; Rowland, 1987). This understanding of narrative also builds upon what Lucaites and Condit (1985) theorize as a “rhetorical narrative”:

[A] rhetorical narrative is a story that serves as an interpretive lens through which the audience is asked to view and understand the verisimilitude of the propositions and proof



before it. Both content and form of the rhetorical narrative are thus subservient to the demands of the relationship between the specific audience to which it is addressed, the specific context in which it appears, and the specific gain towards which it strives. (p. 94)

Thus my view of narrative differs from that of Fisher, but it is impossible to do a review of narrative theory justice without attending to Fisher's work, and I find his discussions of various dimensions of narrative incredibly useful and compatible with my more limited definition. I will therefore use Fisher's scholarship to inform my discussion of narrative theory and the narrative construction of plot and characters.

In terms of offering a more limited view of narrative theory and its rhetorical functions, Lucaites and Condit (1985) propose a useful schema. They refer to this schema as the "recursive interaction of the multiple forms *and* functions of narrative as they are materialized in the discourse of everyday life" (emphasis theirs, Lucaites & Condit, 1985, p. 91). First, three main functions can be parsed from everyday narratives—the poetic (beauty), dialectical (truth), and rhetorical (power) function (Lucaites & Condit, 1985). Regarding form, Lucaites and Condit (1985) address narrative consistency (within itself and larger socio-cultural discourses), brevity, contextualization, and voice (unity or distance between author and narrator/speaker). Most importantly, narratives can be any combination of the aforementioned functions and forms, and "many discourse genres in the postmodern world defy simple and rigid classification" (Lucaites & Condit, 1985, p. 104). By examining narratives as complex forms with a variety of functions, Lucaites and Condit (1985) argue that scholars can better understand narrative's "role in the creation and maintenance of social and political consciousness" (p. 104), and thus important socio-cultural practices at large.

The prevalence of narrative "alloys" (Lucaites & Condit, 1985, p. 104), or stories that defy simple classification, is particularly relevant to photojournalism. Lucaites and Condit's

(1985) theorizing about the form and function of narrative was largely oriented towards written and verbal narratives, and thus they focused on news narratives as primarily dialectical, or concerned with “illuminat[ing] the factual nature of the universe as a means of providing information for human use” (p. 93). While photojournalism is immensely tied up in “facts” and constructions and presumptions of truth-value, as outlined in the visual rhetoric literature review, its visual nature also makes it inextricably woven to the poetic; the photographs engaged by photojournalism are crafted to be aesthetically captivating. Photojournalism is also bound to the rhetorical function of narrative because viewing it as the presentation of “facts” or “truth” would neglect the argumentative dimension of the news (see S. Parry-Giles, 1996, 2000; Perlmutter 1998). Furthermore, it meets Lucaites and Condit’s (1985) rhetorical requirements in that it presents a story or stories which “serve[] as an interpretive lens through which the audience is asked to view and understand” (p. 94), and it “operates in circumstances where there are conflicting and competing interests at stake” (p. 98). While not explicitly addressed by Lucaites and Condit (1985) photojournalism is very much so one of the alloys that they described as defying easy categorization and “dominat[ing] contemporary mass society” (p. 104), thus prompting critical reflection.

Contemporary rhetorical analyses that engage narrative frequently turn to two facets of narrative theory—the construction of plot and character (see Carlson, 1991, 2009; McKinnon, 2009, 2011; S. Parry-Giles, 2000). Plot is a construct that has origins that well proceed what is contemporarily understood as narrative theory (Megill, 1989). Within narrative theory, the term ‘plot’ is traditionally taken to mean the sequence, organization, or arrangement of events within the story (Fisher, 1984, 1985; see also Megill, 1989). As discussed by Stone (1979) and Megill (1989), using the term ‘narrative’ itself generally means a specific type of action sequence;

“Narrative is taken to mean the organization of material in a chronologically sequential order and the focusing of the content into a single coherent story, albeit with sub-plots” (Stone, 1979, p. 3; see also Megill, 1989, p. 644). Thus the construction of plot is a largely defining feature of what is commonly understood as narrative.

Within media narratives, such as those of photojournalism, the sequence and arrangement of material within a story has been theorized as what largely gives meaning to what would otherwise be meaningless “facts” (Gamson, 1989). As stated by Gamson (1989), “Facts have no intrinsic meaning. They take on their meaning by being embedded in a frame or story line that organizes them and gives them coherence, selecting certain ones to emphasize while ignoring others” (p. 157). With this in mind, I want to make clear that plot is not the only dimension of narrative that contributes to meaning making. Megill (1989) draws attention to the primacy often given to plot and states, “we should not allow what is only an aspect of narrative to define narrative as a whole” (p. 644). Furthermore, while acknowledging the importance of plot within narratives and its traditional forms, it should also be noted that traditional expectations of plot can be violated without rendering the story meaningless (Lucaites & Condit, 1985; see also Kermode, 1981). For example, Lucaites and Condit (1985) argue “the rhetorical narrative is functionally constrained to stop short of the formal stage of plot ‘resolution’ by virtue of its purpose to encourage audience enactment” (p. 100). In this sense the traditional plot is left unresolved, but the story is not necessarily rejected for its violation of form. Instead, it is this very violation that facilitates some of the rhetorical force of this type of narrative.

In terms of plot, narrative rationality depends on narrative probability and narrative fidelity (Fisher, 1987). As stated by Fisher (1987), “Rationality is determined by the nature of persons as narrative beings—their inherent awareness of *narrative probability*, what constitutes a

coherent story, and their constant habit of testing *narrative fidelity*, whether or not the stories they experience ring true with the stories they know to be true in their lives” (emphasis Fisher’s, p. 64). The way in which a story unfolds can affect both probability and fidelity, thus impacting rationality. The plot’s impact on rationality is important because rationality is what Fisher (1987) argues “provides a basis for critique” (p. 66). Since photojournalism concerns rhetorically significant visuals, the way in which their construction of plot allows for (and restricts) critique is particularly relevant.

While plot may be given primacy in a lot of theoretically oriented literature on narrative (see Megill, 1989), the construction of character as mentioned also definitely holds a prominent place in a large amount of rhetorical texts that engage narrative and the visual or other discursive texts (see Carlson, 1991, 2009; S. Parry-Giles, 2000; T. Parry-Giles, 1996). Scholars that engage narratives argue that characters/characterizations are rhetorically powerful (see Fisher, 1985; Flores, 2003; S. Parry-Giles, 2000; T. Parry-Giles, 1996). The construction of characters within narratives not only facilitates moral judgments about the actions of the characters as a part of sense making (Lewis, 1987), but judgments are also made about the future or probable actions of characters (Fisher, 1985). As stated by Fisher (1985), “if one’s character can be determined and if one’s story in regard to a particular issue can be ascertained, it is possible to predict a person’s probable actions” (p. 348). Therefore one’s character construction can not only embody judgments regarding their past and present, but also their future.

The rhetorical power of character and its potential slippage across time within the media is illustrated in Parry-Giles’ (2000) analysis of the image making, or media character-construction, of Hillary Rodham Clinton. Parry-Giles (2000) argues that the media engages the same images of Clinton across time, which (1) constructs her character in terms of gendered

stereotypes; (2) decontextualizes her past actions; and (3) recontextualizes them (visually) within new stories. Ultimately this ‘visual recycling’ and character stereotyping imbeds Clinton in our collective memory where “we are to fear women with power, yet admire women with the status of victim” (S. Parry-Giles, 2000, p. 221). Analyses like Parry-Giles’ (2000) point to the fact that the rhetorical power of characters is not purely within narratives, but can also facilitate social judgments that position characters within larger social structures that have material and ideational consequences, especially for women (see also McKinnon, 2009, 2011).

Further developing the rhetorical power of character, it has also been theorized that characters can embody cultural ideals, beliefs, norms, and ideological tension (S. Parry-Giles, 2000; T. Parry-Giles, 1996). In the previous example, Hillary Rodham Clinton embodied certain gendered ideological tensions regarding the status of political women (S. Parry-Giles, 2000). Analyses that illustrate the potential material and ideational effects of gendered character constructions even more explicitly can be seen in the work of Carlson (1999) and McKinnon (2009, 2011), who look at various trials which have been impacted by the perceived validity of women’s narratives and thus the construction of their characters.

Given the array of socio-culturally important constructs that characters can embody, it has also been theorized that individual characters can be fused to issues of collective identity (T. Parry-Giles, 1996). For example, in Parry-Giles’ (1996) analysis of the confirmation of Thurgood Marshall to the Supreme Court, he discusses the way Marshall’s character rhetorically came to embody “‘civil rights’ for the American community” (p. 370). This fusion not only has implications for character, but it also helps determine the meaning of the issues itself. As stated by Parry-Giles (1996), “The political language that creates the American community [...] is a language of character and personality where the commitments that are the foundations of that

language achieve their primary meaning through their embodiment with particular characters” (p. 370). In other words, we can make sense of characters via their embodiment of issues of collective identity, while also making judgments about issues based on their embodiment in specific characters.

Lastly, I would like to note that “characterological coherence” (Fisher, 1987, p. 47; see also T. Parry-Giles, 1996), or the evaluation and interpretation of characters and their motives, is like the construction of plot in that it is also important to narrative rationality. As stated by Carlson (1991), “a single narrative element, character, may alter an audience’s perception of a series of events” (p. 39). For example, in the sex scandal of American religious icon Henry Ward Beecher, Carlson (1991) explores the way that the rhetorical shift in Beecher’s character from “the traditional role of a strong, vigorous male” (p. 48) to that of a feminized and mother-like minister allowed for his culpability to be absolved. In this case the construction of character played an incredibly important role in determining the outcome of a trial, thus reinforcing the idea that constructions of characters can have both material and ideational consequences.

Collectively, this brief review of narrative literature pertaining to the construction of plot and characters emphasizes the rhetorically important role stories play in our culture. Whether through the arrangement and selection of particular happenings or the characterizations of those partaking in the action, these stories have material and ideational implications for contemporary American society. While briefly alluded to, what this review leaves to be desired is how narrative theory is imbricated with theorizing of nation and memory studies in terms of the visual. The following section will draw on this review to orient the reader to the ways in which narrative has been theoretically connected to the other areas of interest in this paper—memory and nation—as understood through a visually oriented rhetorical perspective.

One of the foundational assertions that allows for the aforementioned constructs to be connected is that the visual can comprise narratives (see Zelizer, 2004). When considering the images of photojournalism as visual narratives, their explanatory nature rhetorically operates differently than the words that comprise a typical media narrative (see Lucaites & Condit, 1985; Zelizer, 2004). Zelizer (2004) explains this different rhetorical functioning and its ability to slip across time. To quote Zelizer's (2004) explanation at length:

Images break the sequencing of action in the middle. By freezing that sequencing midway at a particularly memorable representational moment, spectators are able to embellish numerous imaginary schemes on the "about to" moment that is depicted in the sequencing of action. In this sense they supply a contingent dimension to visual depiction. That contingent dimension, in turn, helps activate the image's third meaning that facilitates connections between images across times and places. (p. 164)

This means that the images of photojournalism comprise visual narratives that disrupt discursive plot conventions such that they move across time tapping into the visual conventions, or tropes, of other memorable narratives. Their rhetoricality is rooted in the fact that they do not offer a complete plot evolution, but instead leave the ending unstated or unrepresented, inviting the viewing audience to participate in the crafting of the narrative's conclusion (Lucaites & Condit, 1985).

Another assertion, or linkage, made by scholars concerned with these constructs is that the visual and narratives are connected in relation to the formation of identities and thus characters (see Finnegan, 2003; S. Parry-Giles, 2000). Quoting the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, Olick and Robbins (1998) state, "all attempts to elucidate the notion of personal identity [and, by extension, group identity] independently of and in isolation from the notions of narrative [...] are bound to fail" (p. 122). Additionally, scholars have argued that identity is also constituted through memory processes (see Olick & Robbins, 1998). Olick and Robbins (1998) argue, "Memory is a central, if not the central, medium through which identities are constituted" (p.

133). Thus collectively it has been asserted by scholars that identities can be visually formed through both narratives and collective memory processes.

On a more macro level and in terms of theorizing about nation, the stories—both visual and discursive—we collectively (re)tell and consume become part of our national social imaginary and thus pieces of our collective memory processes (see Owen & Ehrenhaus, 2010). As described by Owen and Ehrenhaus (2010), “The contours of cultural memory offer insight into the dynamics of a society’s ideological contestation over ‘concepts of the nation’” (pp. 133-134). From this work two more assertions about the linkages between nation, narrative, and memory emerge: first, the stories we tell contribute to and constitute part of our collective memory; and secondly, the contours of our collective memory illuminate the way in which we theorize about nation.

At this point I have reproduced a variety of assertions, and it is thus useful to offer a summary before addressing how they function in relation to one another:

- (1) Visuals can comprise narratives.
- (2) Visual narratives in the realm of photojournalism have a plot structure that differs from that of other media narratives in that they revolve around a climactic point and leave the conclusion of the action unrepresented.
- (3) Visual narratives participate in identity and character construction.
- (4) Identity, both personal and on group levels, is constituted through memory processes.
- (5) The narratives we consume and tell are part of our collective memory processes.
- (6) Our collective memory processes shape the way in which we theorize about nation.

In this sense we can not only assert, as many scholars have, that narrative, nation, and memory are connected, but we can begin to see all of these assertions working in concert. The



photojournalistic narratives we consume and tell rhetorically function in a way that is unique in comparison to other media narratives; by breaking the plot sequence in the middle, these images are able to rhetorically become condensed encapsulations that “reduce complex and multidimensional phenomena into memorable scenes” (Zelizer, 2004, p. 164). These memorable visual bits slip across time and become imbricated with other photojournalistic tropes, such that they contribute to identity formation and character construction on both individual and social levels (see Finnegan, 2003; S. Parry-Giles, 2000). This slippage across time and narrative imbrication is inextricably bound to memory processes because it draws attention to other pieces that also reside in our national social imaginary, and thus they have become visual tropes as a function of circulating in our collective memory. Because these stories and the collective memory processes they constitute not only communicate information about identity on a personal level but also a large-scale social level, they are also indicative of ideological discourses that contribute to the ways in which we theorize about nation. In sum, by reading across the assertions, we can move from what the linkages look like to how they work together, and without narrative theory the ways in which the visual, as manifest in photojournalism, rhetorically function in terms of collective memory processes and the theorizing of nation could not be thoroughly explicated.

With visual rhetoric and narrative criticism at the heart of this analysis, the subsequent chapters will proceed as follows: in the following chapter, I disentangle the visual narratives of Orlinsky’s (2011a) “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized.” This analysis examines the ways in which Orlinsky’s (2011a) photographs engage a gendered representational dichotomization while also problematizing and nuancing this dichotomization. The third and fourth chapters turn to Olick’s (2007) process-relational conceptualization of memory to build upon the visual and narrative

analysis of the second chapter. In building upon the second chapter, the third and fourth chapters bring a variety of other relevant discourses to the table in order to fully situate Orlinsky's (2011a) images within relevant fields, genres, and profiles that pertain to this photographic medium. By bringing these discourses together while foregrounding my primary text of analysis, I am able to address how Orlinsky's (2011a) photographs rhetorically participate in collective memory processes and thus the theorizing of nation. While both of these chapters are therefore topically related, they are divided because one is primarily concerned with gazing inwards at constructions of the U.S. as nation (chapter three) and the other gazes outwards to explore the rhetorical workings of theorizing Mexico as nation (chapter four). Lastly, I conclude this thesis with a summary of my primary arguments and the problematic nature of these images within the context of major themes as addressed across the analysis chapters, and I offer a brief discussion of potential directions for future research.

## CHAPTER II

VISUAL RHETORIC & GENDERED NARRATIVES  
IN “MEXICO’S DRUG WAR, FEMINIZED”

Contemporary American society is marked by globalization and saturated by news media. Given the proliferation of information from around the world that is more readily available to the average American than ever before, the news media industry has become increasingly complex in terms of how news stories are generated and consumed. While this complexity may mean more information faster for the audience, it also means increased competition and pressure among journalists and photographers to meet fleeting deadlines in the global news market. As stated by Clark (2004), “24 hours is a long time in the news” (p. 702), and competition intensifies news agencies’ reliance on familiar cultural narratives, or ‘template reporting’, as opposed to faithfulness to contextual accuracy (see also Beaudoin & Thorson, 2001; Del Zotto, 2002). Regarding international coverage, this can result in increased reliance on racialized, gendered, and other socially stereotyped portrayals that emphasize drama and that Western viewers will be quick to recognize (see Clark, 2004).<sup>7</sup> Just because the audience is receiving more news faster does not mean the media’s selection of what to report and how to report it is not still a subjective and highly politicized process with implications for collective memory processes and the theorizing of nation.

While there are many frameworks at play in the coverage and retelling of international events, gender is both central to and inextricably interwoven into the American news media’s

coverage of international affairs. While the American mainstream news media is by no means one cohesive machine, and in fact often contains various factions working at cross-purposes, the widespread use of gender framing is not surprising given that gender is one of the primary structures used to organize and make sense of both our daily lives and world more broadly (Epstein, 2007; Ridgeway, 2011). Furthermore, gendered narratives and frames do not merely convey the news stories at hand, but they also have ideational and material consequences for those whom they discuss and re-present because they participate in the positioning of those individuals within our social hierarchies, thereby making evaluative statements about their personhood (Epstein, 2007; Ridgeway, 2011). Especially in the context of societal crisis, such as that of Mexico's Drug War, these gendered inequalities can shape quality of life and chances of survival (Epstein, 2007; see also Crenshaw, 1991).<sup>8</sup> Therefore the images and stories the media produces can and often do have material and ideational impacts on both those who are re-presented and those who are consuming such media (Perlmutter, 1998).

The gendered narratives that are most culturally pervasive, and thus often engaged by the news media in their framing, are referred to as 'ancestral narratives' and have been interrogated in much rhetorical scholarship (see Carlson, 1991, 2009; McKinnon, 2011). These gendered stories have deeply entrenched cultural roots and continue to be reproduced and adapted over time to conform to contemporary norms (Carlson, 2009; McKinnon, 2011). It is the mutability of these stories that allows them to permeate a wide array of discourses across time. Carlson (2009) reiterates this when she states, "these ancestral narratives can easily be manipulated to alter, manipulate, or reapply those norms to fit the judgment desired by society" (as quoted in McKinnon, 2011, p. 181). In this sense, these narratives not only shape our judgments and perceptions, but our judgments can likewise shape the contours of these narratives.

In this chapter, I put Western ancestral narratives in conversation with the visual rhetoric of Orlinsky's (2011a) "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" in order to more fully understand how gendered narratives rhetorically function with the medium of photojournalism. My analysis therefore primarily engages visual rhetorical criticism, but also narrative criticism given that photojournalism is comprised of visual narratives. In addition to the blending of these two modes of criticism, this analysis engages the photographs individually and collectively, thereby attending to its rhetorical functions and gendered narratives on multiple levels. I argue that it is important to differentiate between the narratives that are forwarded within individual photographs and those that are forwarded by the piece as a whole in order to avoid an oversimplification of the rhetorical processes at play.

To establish a more thorough framework for my analysis, the next section of this chapter delves deeper into the gendered ancestral narratives that mark American society. I review common gendered narratives that have been (and continue to be) appropriated in American culture and news media, how these stories shape understandings of women's characters, and lastly, how these narratives contribute to a dichotomization of women. This review will allow me to truly nuance the aforementioned dichotomization as it is visually manifest in Orlinsky's (2011a) photographs. While the dichotomization of women in mainstream American news media coverage is not novel (see Nagel, 2003; Owen, Stein, & Vande Berg, 2007), critical reflection from a visual rhetorical perspective can attend to its truly multilayered nature thereby problematizing its dualisms.

### **Ancestral Narratives**

One of the most common gendered ancestral narratives that has been reappropriated in American news and culture throughout history is that of the private and public spheres. This

archetypal story positions women in the private, or intimate, sphere where they are primarily relegated to the home, and men are positioned in the public sphere where they are granted more agency and autonomy in the world at large (Hochschild, 2003; McKinnon, 2011; see also Blair-Loy, 2003; Carlson, 1991; Jamieson, 1995; Picart, 2003). The separation of these spheres thus coincides with cultural norms that not only dictate what types of places one's body is allowed to inhabit, but also what types of actions gendered bodies are allowed to perform within various social scenes.

Another common ancestral narrative is that of "True Womanhood" (Carlson, 2009; McKinnon, 2011). "True Womanhood" narratives establish an idealized woman whose character embodies "allegiance to family, sentimentality, domesticity, purity, frailty, and the perfect outward demonstration of femininity through demeanor and mannerism" (McKinnon, 2011, p. 181; see also Carlson, 2009). Narratives that construct this idealized woman have extensive rhetorical roots, and scholars have even traced their origins to discourses about rhetoric within the Greek polis (see Sutton, 1999). While in the Greek polis this woman was seen as "the helpmate of rational man" (Sutton, 1999, pp. 105-106; see also McKinnon, 2011, p. 182), McKinnon (2011) argues modern incarnations of "True Womanhood" construct the exemplar woman as the following:

[P]ure and concerned with the sphere of domesticity; she takes great care in self-adornment, and is wholeheartedly devoted to her family. This manifestation of womanhood is not threatening to patriarchal organizing, but instead is itself a tool of patriarchy and hence sexism; a way to demonstrate that women matter without attending to the concerns of women that would challenge the structure. (p. 182)

McKinnon's (2011) description of the contemporary exemplar of "True Womanhood" illustrates the interconnectivity of gendered ancestral narratives; narratives of "True Womanhood" draw on understandings of the private and public sphere narrative and vice versa.

Collectively, ancestral narratives shape understandings of women's characters by establishing norms for femininity and womanhood in addition to creating a cultural repertoire of exemplar women that other women's narratives are evaluated against (McKinnon, 2011; see also Carlson, 1991). Put simply, ancestral narratives establish a gendered framework for the sense making of women's roles, bodies, and actions (i.e. judgments about their overall characterizations). As described by Carlson (2009), "Though they begin as the building blocks of stories, characterizations can take on lives of their own, moving between and among other narratives until they become 'culturally accepted accurate depictions of a class' and can be labeled 'character-types'" (p. 18; see also Condit, 1987; Smith, 1999). This means that women's characterizations are not just framed and evaluated against one ancestral narrative, but they draw on multiple narratives while being (re)constructed and categorized.

In the realm of media discourses, the evaluation of characterizations often rhetorically constructs victimizing and/or vilifying portrayals by aligning women's characters with the norms and exemplars of ancestral narratives or placing women's characters in opposition to or violation of said norms (see Carlson, 1991, 1999; McKinnon, 2011; see also Jamieson, 1995). A character's conformity to or violation of the norms and exemplars rhetorically constructed by ancestral narratives can also further gendered archetypes about women's characters (Carlson, 1991). For example, characterological compliance with "True Womanhood" often results in the media forwarding a victimizing portrayal, especially when the women's characters are also connected to stories of motherhood. As stated by Jacobs (2010) the evocation of victimized mothers is "a persistent theme of traumatic memory" (p. 36). Particularly as they relate to the visual, narratives of victimized mothers and children are exceptionally emotive because of their universal symbolism (Jacobs, 2010; Malkki, 1996; Parameswaran, 2002). This universal

symbolism in combination with the recurrence throughout collective memory as it pertains to trauma makes narratives of victimized women common cultural and news media artifacts amongst women whose characters are framed in accordance to ancestral narratives.

Conversely, when the media positions women's narratives in opposition to ancestral narratives, such as that of "True Womanhood," the re-presented women's bodies and characters are rhetorically vilified. For supposedly transgressing the boundaries and norms established by ancestral narratives, vilified women are portrayed as threatening to men and society at large (McKinnon, 2009; Sutton, 1999). As stated by McKinnon (2011), these women are often "seen as threatening for the ways they use their bodies outside of conjugal bonds or for non-conjugal functions" (p. 182). Furthermore, this vilification positions women such that their bodies and stories rhetorically call forth notions of discipline. As described by Sutton (1999), the sexuality of the vilified woman "must be defeated" (p. 107), thus rendering the vilified woman "alienated from herself, but connected to man" (p. 107; see also McKinnon, 2011, p. 182). Vilifying media narratives and depictions therefore not only evoke value-laden judgments about the women they portray, but they also arouse prescriptive courses of action in the form of disciplining.

In combination with one another, these vilifying and victimizing portrayals contribute to a dichotomization of women, which forwards essentialized characterizations and narratives. As argued by Jamieson (1995), it is this essentialization that rhetorically facilitates silencing and the precarious binds that often mark women:

Binds draw their power from their capacity to simplify complexity. Faced with a complicated situation or behavior, the human tendency is to split apart and dichotomize its elements. So we contrast good and bad, strong and weak, for and against, true and false [...]. (p. 5)

McKinnon (2011) also summarizes this dichotomization and the way in which it rhetorically positions women in a precarious bind when she states, "womanhood can make you too private,



too meek, too scandalous, while at the same time rarely affording one the ability to speak and be heard in public or by states—especially if the state is not one you ‘belong’ to” (p. 180). Non-U.S. women are also dichotomized and representationally bound by the ‘paradox of enactment’—a double bind imposed upon non-U.S. women to conform to Western gendered norms overtly while at the same time not displaying too much emotion so as not to be perceived as hysterical, unruly, and thus undesirable (McKinnon, 2009, 2011). This dichotomization is therefore of particular interest and consequence when considering the re-presentations of non-U.S. women in Orlinsky’s (2011a) photographs because of the way in which gendered ancestral narratives and archetypes transcend cultural boundaries in the positioning of these women.

In the following section, I further explore and problematize this dichotomization through a rhetorical analysis that attends to the visual narratives of “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” (Orlinsky, 2011a). Problematizing this dichotomization allows me, as a rhetorical critic, to unpack the ways in which victimization and vilification occur simultaneously within these images and closely attend to how visuals, and Orlinsky’s (2011a) photographs in particular, extend ancestral narratives rhetorical work. Specifically, this visual rhetorical analysis will illuminate the ways in which the simultaneous visual occurrence of ‘victim’ and ‘villain’ reifies social structures and processes of collective memory in which women’s bodies, and particularly those bodies that are racialized and “othered” as they are read against Western gendered narratives, are both “too meek” and “too scandalous” (McKinnon, 2011, p. 180) to speak in public. Thus a visual rhetoric analysis allows me to address how these women are precariously bound in a silenced position where they are visually granted space within a public arena, but this space is discursively limited by the way it rhetorically reinscribes problematic dimensions of our

process-relational collective memory and (re)constructs representations in accordance with Western gendered narratives.

In sum, the remainder of this chapter will proceed by first discussing Orlinsky's (2011a) "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" holistically and then teasing apart the rhetorically constructed narrative threads of the piece, all while devoting particular attention to the visual.<sup>9</sup> These narrative threads are organized around their contributions to the dichotomization of women; thus, there is a distinction made between those slides and images that rhetorically serve a vilifying function and those that serve a victimizing function within the piece. To conclude this chapter and set the stage for further analysis on the intersections of collective memory processes and theorizing of nation as demonstrated in this text, I problematize the aforementioned gendered dualism and its precarious representational binds.

### **Dichotomization of Women within Visual Narratives**

As noted, before addressing the visual narratives and dichotomization of women within Orlinsky's (2011a) "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized," I would like to address the piece holistically by offering a brief overview. This overview is meant to expand on that which was established in the introduction and provide an intrinsic framework for the visual rhetorical analysis of the images. In its entirety, the photo slide show contains 20 slides, all of which contain some sort of black and white photograph from inside Ciudad Juárez's women's prison El Cereso (see Orlinsky, 2011a). The vast majority of the slides are either documentary or portrait style photographs of incarcerated women and their day-to-day life in the prison. Woven throughout these images, there are four slides that contain a small photograph and a statement about the Drug War's "feminization" against a solid black background. Although these slides each contain a small photograph, throughout my analysis I refer to these four slides as 'statement

slides' in order to differentiate them from those that more prominently feature Orlinsky's photography. The statement slides guide the overarching narrative of the piece by contextualizing the rest of images within discourses surrounding the Drug War and addressing how the Drug War relates to Mexican women and their children. Therefore, these slides supplement the typically brief commentary offered in the form of captions on the rest of the photo slides. As a whole Orlinsky's (2011a) photo slideshow therefore engages a variety of photojournalistic genres, such as black and white photography, portraiture, and social documentary photography.

In what follows, I unpack the visual rhetorical maneuvers that this slide show makes while speaking into the ancestral narratives reviewed in the introduction, and thus I address the positioning of these women and their stories in regard to specific gendered archetypal characters. More specifically, I attend to the visual narratives of vilification and victimization, and then I problematize this dichotomization by addressing the rhetorical dimensions of the piece that simultaneously speak into both victimization and vilification, accordingly placing the women visually and narratively in a third, precariously bound story line of 'both/and' as opposed to 'either-or'. My analyses thus draw heavily on the visual rhetoric and narrative scholarship framework as established in the introduction while keeping the aforementioned gendered narratives in particular at the foreground of the discussion. In doing so, the piece in its entirety will be explored, but particular emphasis will be devoted to the main section of the slide show, or the portrait and documentary style photographs that comprise over two thirds of the slides.

**The vilified women.** The first narrative thread that emerges within Orlinsky's (2011a) piece is that of vilification. In this sense there are a variety of re-presentations that rhetorically construct the women's stories and characters as socially undesirable, out of control, and

generally threatening. This thread is rhetorically constructed via the following strategies: (1) references to Western gendered ancestral narratives (and thus the norms and exemplars they evoke) and (2) the foregrounding of the women's sexuality. These visual rhetorical strategies are by no means mutually exclusive and in fact reinforce one another throughout the piece. Therefore, I discuss the way in which these rhetorical strategies operate individually while also attending to their immense areas of functional and thematic overlap.

The first rhetorical strategy, or references to Western gendered ancestral narratives, is demonstrated by slides that contain explicit visual and discursive references to constructs like the familial relationship between women and children or the boundaries between the public and private spheres. References to Western gendered ancestral narratives thus simultaneously rhetorically frame the re-presented women in two ways—visually and textually<sup>10</sup>—that buttress one another. There are two slides very early on in the piece (slides one and three) that exemplify this rhetorical approach.

References to Western gendered narratives via the depiction of the familial relationship between women and children can be seen in the image on the first slide, which contains women and children standing together at a counter, but focuses on a small girl in the center who is propping up her head. Rhetorically, the arm propping up her head creates a vertical line in the image that directs the viewers' gaze to her face and her look of uncertainty. As stated by Finnegan (2003) in her analysis of similarly composed documentary photographs, "This line tightly focuses the viewer's attention on her face [...]; it is *her* suffering and anxiety that is presented for contemplation" (emphasis Finnegan's, p. 98). Therefore everything else around the girl (i.e. other women and children of various ages) fade into the background and the girl's emotions are emphasized for the audience. While the women who flank the child in this

photograph are rhetorically pushed to the margins of the viewer's attention, their bodies still literally serve as a frame for the image given the composition of the shot, (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 1). Instead of the photo being cropped to the small girl, or even her and the other children that are close by, just enough distance is given in the shot to include a woman to the left and right. Therefore, although they are not the focus of the image, their presence is by no means negligible because it offers context and shifts the explicit characters of the visual narrative from that of just the children to that of women and children.



**Slide 1: [No Caption]**

This image serves as an example of vilification because of the way in which it uses references to Western gendered narratives to call the re-presented women's enactment of motherhood into question. Although the 'suffering' girl (and other children) is front and center, the re-presented women are not visually connecting with her. Instead of being re-presented in a

supporting role, they are neither facing her nor touching her, but framing her. Furthermore, this slide contains the following vilifying statement: “Mexico’s drug war is more than an armed conflict. With government estimates of its death toll well above 30,000, it is now a humanitarian crisis affecting families and shaping the lives of children” (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 1). This statement vilifies the re-presented women because it highlights the effect of the Drug War on children, thereby drawing even more attention to the supposed suffering of the child in the photograph and thus the supposed failure(s) of her mother. More specifically, the statement on this slide discursively supports the aforementioned visual rhetorical maneuvers in two ways. First, by describing the Drug War as now being “a humanitarian crisis affecting families and shaping the lives of children” (Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 1), the audiences’ attention on the small somber child is reinforced. Second, this statement continues the marginalization of the women as failing to enact “appropriate” mothering roles in relation to the child; their supposed negligence is cast as having great influence on the trajectories of these children’s lives. The statement and image on this slide therefore engage in a complimentary relationship in which they reinforce one another in the framing of the re-presented women as villains.

Another example of references to Western gendered narratives is illustrated by the depiction of women’s bodies outside the bounds of the private sphere on the third slide. It states, “At the women’s prison of Ciudad Juárez, an estimated 80 percent of the inmates are there for narcotics-related crimes. The number of women in prison for federal crimes in Mexico has risen by 400 percent since 2007” (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 3). This statement slide highlights the exigency of the Drug War’s impact on women, and thus their families when this slide is considered in combination with the first statement slide. The photograph on this slide is an extreme long shot, or a relatively narrow shot that captures a scene’s depth like a tunnel (A.

Berger, 1989); more specifically, it engages deep focus on a hallway in the prison where women are walking towards the camera. This type of shot makes the things closest to the lens somewhat out of focus, but the women at the end of the hallway appear crisp. Additionally, the composition of this image makes the women appear small in relation to their surroundings while also capturing their movement forward, which visually echoes the urgency of the statement regarding the escalating Drug War. Thus there is a great sense of urgency on this slide, and the women's bodies and actions are framed as "out of control." These women are framed as "out of control" not only because the slide states women are increasingly being incarcerated for narcotics-related crimes, but because their bodies are depicted en masse within prison walls and compositionally in way that that the urgency of the problem stated on the slide is re-presented by the women's bodies.



**Slide 3: [No Caption]**

The depiction of women walking down the hallway rhetorically forwards a vilifying characterization and narrative because it depicts the women's characters as violating gendered norms prescribed by Western ancestral narratives, such as domesticity, frailty, purity, and passivity (McKinnon, 2011). Furthermore, the relation of the women to the one man displayed in the image also reinforces the idea that their bodies and characters are in opposition to normative Westernized womanhood. He is positioned in the foreground of the photo at the opening of the hallway, and, while not facing the oncoming women, he appears tense (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 3). His uneasy depiction visually positions the women in the photo such that they are not in a deferential position to the man, but are in a position of impending threat. Collectively, this image is an example of a vilifying characterization and narrative thread because of the way in which the women are re-presented as "out of control" and part of a growing threat, which ultimately positions them in opposition to the gendered norms dictated by ancestral narratives.

The second major rhetorical strategy that contributes to vilification is demonstrated by slides that contain explicit visual and discursive references to the women's sexuality. Within the photo slideshow there are an additional three slides that rhetorically engage such references in the vilification of those who are re-presented. None of these are statement slides, but they are instead documentary style photographs with brief captions. In terms of rhetorical functions, these images extend that which has been discussed regarding ancestral narratives (i.e. women characterized in a hyper-sexualized manner violate representational norms for femininity like that of purity), but place additional emphasis on sexuality through re-presentations that reference more feminized constructs, such as fertility.

The foregrounding of sexuality as a rhetorical strategy that constructs characterizations and thus narratives of vilification is demonstrated by the depiction of pregnancy, women with



babies, and small children by themselves. All three of these types of depictions make an explicit connection between the primary characters of the images, incarcerated women, and their fertility. First, the depiction of pregnancy is illustrated by slide nine, which contains an image of a pregnant inmate partaking in arts and crafts. She stands in the middle of the photograph, her belly the focal point of the image. Attention is also drawn to her pregnancy by the horizontal stripes of her shirt that graphically stand out against the other smaller patterns within the photograph (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 9). Documentation of pregnancy serves as evidence of active sexuality (Finnegan, 2003), something which American narratives of criminality frame as that which is a dangerous desire and needs to be controlled by the state in order to reform and reduce criminality (Haney, 2010). Active sexuality within the prison context thus serves as a violation of sexual and self-control and is implicitly framed as subversive behavior and an indicator of a woman's violation of "proper" rights, needs, and desires.



**Slide 9: Karla Solorio, 27, and Ms. Núñez in the arts and crafts area of the prison.**

Secondly, the foregrounding of sexuality as rhetorically constructed by the depiction of a woman and baby is illustrated by slide 15. The woman and baby are positioned in the middle of the shot serving not only as the focal point of the image, but also as a visual bisector between the large light and dark areas of the image. Because the woman's back is to a large set of windows that function as the primary light source for the shot, her body is crisply silhouetted to one side and shadowed to the other. In combination with the fit of her clothing, this image therefore draws attention to the curves of her body and sexuality as a woman. This sexuality is intensified by the presence of the baby, which serves as a visual reminder of the woman's fertility and sexuality. Since the woman and the baby are the only people visible in the image, the viewer is left to connect them both visually and in terms of a maternal relationship. While the vilification of this re-presentation undoubtedly rhetorically functions by also tapping into Western gendered ancestral narratives, what primarily visually vilifies this relationship is the positioning of the woman as a sexualized being in relation to the infant. While standing over the baby, she is not depicted as watching it or playing with it as would be dictated by narratives of "True Womanhood," but appears to be filing her fingernails in a position that looks both distant and dismissive. The dark bars of the cell also appear in stark contrast to the light bathing the baby in its play chair. Collectively, the re-presented woman's sexuality is foregrounded, and thus she is vilified, by the way in which her character is rhetorically constructed on its own as a silhouetted (sexualized) bisector of dark and light and the way in which this construction is compounded by the presence of the baby.



**Slide 15: A cell block for women affiliated with the Azteca gang.**

Lastly, the third rhetorical strategy that foregrounds the re-presented women's sexuality and contributes to their characterization in opposition to Western gendered norms, and thus their vilification, is demonstrated by the depiction of small children in isolation. An example of this rhetorical strategy is seen on slide 20. As in the aforementioned image of the woman and baby, the photo on slide 20 also uses the interplay between light and dark to accentuate certain features of the picture. This image re-presents two little boys on the floor of a hallway in the prison closely facing each other. Not only do the black bars of the cells and dark floor lie in contrast to the white walls, but the lighting of the image makes the most distant point of the hallway illuminated while the children are largely cast in a shadow at the front of the image. The use of an extreme long shot in this photograph not only accentuates the contrast between light and dark along the hallway, but it also makes the figures of the boys appear especially small in relation to

their surroundings. By drawing attention to their small size and the lack of any adults in the hallway, their vulnerability as children is brought to the viewers' attention and a sense of abandonment is conveyed. In addition to creating the perception of abandonment, the fact that the children are in a prison is brought to the viewers' attention by the black bars of the jail cells that line the length of the otherwise white hallway. By explicitly displaying children within the women's prison, implicit references to the women's sexuality and fertility are again forwarded in a way that rhetorically vilifies them for not disciplining their bodies in a Westernized normative way.



**Slide 20: Children played in a hallway of the prison.**

This image of children seemingly alone in a prison hallway also speaks directly back into the Westernized gendered narratives as already alluded to. More specifically, the re-presentation of small children alone in a prison presents the viewer with an image that violates the mainstream American devotion to family schema (Ridgeway, 2011) and narrative of women as

“supermoms” (Hochschild, 2003). Both the devotion to family schema and the narrative of supermoms present an idealized conception of motherhood in which mothers must be constantly present and attentive to their children’s needs (Hochschild, 2003; Ridgeway, 2011); a devoted supermom would never let her children play alone on the floor of a prison. When women fail to meet these increasingly high standards for what the character of a ‘good mother’ is and does, they are framed as unfit and delinquent mothers, thereby vilified for the supposed neglect of their children and character flaws. This photo’s position as the last one in the slideshow also evokes the vilifying narratives of the aforementioned photos to enthymematically let the audience know that when women have a problematic understanding of gendered rights, needs and desires, such as thinking their only option for supporting their family is through crime, this is what happens—the idealized heteronormative family is broken and children suffer (see Finnegan 2001b, 2003).

As a whole, the narrative thread of ‘the vilified women’ is primarily rhetorically constructed through references to Western gendered narratives and the foregrounding of the represented women’s sexuality. Furthermore, while the aforementioned images can individually be categorized as predominately engaging one of these rhetorical strategies or another, there are also great areas of overlap that bind the images together. This overlap is best illustrated by photos like that of the two small boys in the prison hallway which referenced sexuality and Westernized gendered narratives like that of “supermoms” (see Hochschild, 2003). The following subsection will not only address numerous other photos throughout Orlinsky’s (2011a) “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized,” but also delve into these rhetorical strategies more as they pertain to a very different narrative thread—victimization.

**The victimized women.** In a striking manner, many of the same rhetorical strategies are used to victimize the women as were used for their vilification. Therefore this section likewise

addresses references to Western gendered ancestral narratives and the foregrounding of the women's sexuality, again devoting particular attention to the visual rhetorical dimensions of these strategies, but as they are manifest in photographs that rhetorically position the women in a very different way. Thus the way in which the same visual rhetorical strategies can be used in what appears to be diametrically opposed ways will also be discussed.

The first rhetorical strategy that contributes to the characterization and narrative thread of victimization—references to Western gendered narratives—is demonstrated by depictions of domesticity and women who appear to be distressed. There are three slides that strongly engage this rhetorical strategy and thus contribute to the narrative thread of victimization. Of these three slides, one is a photograph early on in the piece and the other two are statement slides, one towards the center of the piece and one towards the end (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slides 2, 12, and 18 respectively). The positions of these three slides across the piece at large speaks into the notion that the narrative thread of 'the victimized women' is not only something that individual photos gesture towards, but that "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" (Orlinsky, 2011a) as a whole forwards.

The depiction of domesticity as a rhetorical strategy that references Western gendered narratives to characterize the re-presented women as victims functions by aligning the women's bodies, and thus their characters, with actions and roles that typify an exemplar of "True Womanhood" (Carlson, 2009; McKinnon, 2011). For example, slide two depicts domesticity by displaying an image of the outdoor laundry area of El Cereso prison (see Orlinsky, 2011a). The image of the laundry area evokes notions of the intimate sphere and the domesticity of the women of El Cereso. When looking at the lower half of the photograph, it is virtually impossible to distinguish this prison yard laundry area from that which could be anywhere else in Ciudad

Juárez; bright sunlight bathes the hanging clothes, the ground is littered with shadows as the clothes appear to sway in a slight breeze, and a woman in casual clothing with a bucket walks away from the clotheslines. In contrast with this imagery, the top half of the photo is bisected by open sky towards the left and cement walls topped with chain-link fence and barbed wire towards the right. The top half of the photograph therefore appears austere and rigid. Together, the juxtaposition between the bottom and top half of the photograph visually frames and contains the domesticity of the women; like a lid on a glass jar, the barbed wire, chain-link fences, and cement walls contain the women's domesticity while still allowing for it to be markedly visible. The composition of this image speaks into victimization as opposed to vilification because the woman in the laundry area is largely re-presented in accordance to Westernized ancestral gendered narratives. Instead of violating "proper" presentations of femininity, the prison walls, as described, serve a framing and containment function which foregrounds the domesticity of the women of El Cereso. Because the woman in this shot is not facing the camera and is displayed from a distance, her identity is obscured and she becomes a 'visual synecdoche' (Finnegan, 2003) for incarcerated Mexican women at large. In this sense the image forwards the argument that it is not just this woman who enacts "proper" presentations of domesticity and has been victimized by the Drug War but the women of El Cereso more generally.



**Slide 2: The laundry area of El Cereso, the prison in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.**

References to Western gendered narratives via the depiction of women who appear to be distressed likewise rhetorically function by aligning the re-presented women's bodies, and thus their characters, with displays characteristic of an exemplar of "True Womanhood" (Carlson, 2009; McKinnon, 2011). As described, an exemplar of "True Womanhood" is marked by femininity that manifests as frailty. One example of this visual rhetorical strategy, slide 12, reproduces a softened portrait style photo of an unnamed woman and states, "Women fending for themselves in a shattered economy, many of them widowed in the violence, are increasingly drawn into criminal activity such as drug trafficking and kidnapping—which some may see as the only options available to support their families" (Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 12). Because the woman on this slide is not explicitly named and visually similar to many of the other representations in terms of composition, she too serves as a visual synecdoche for women victimized by the Drug War (see Finnegan, 2003 for a discussion of visual synecdoche). Another



slide that displays this rhetorical maneuver states, “The prison population increasingly includes young women who were coerced or manipulated into committing crimes—or women guilty of simply being with a boyfriend or family member in the wrong place at the wrong time” (Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 18). Once again, this frames their characters as victims of circumstance lacking a true understanding of their actions. It positions the women as girlfriends and family members whose actions are the result of their bodies having been used by men for wrongdoing. In this narrative, the men are the agentic characters. Furthermore, the way in which the image on this slide provides a stark depiction of a woman in distress reinforces the statements that have already framed the women as largely unagentic. This medium shot displays this inmate doing what appears to be crying and wiping tears away from her face, the pain of which is highlighted by the bright white walls behind her. No other people are visible in the shot, which also conveys a sense of suffering in isolation. In combination with the statement about the women being “coerced or manipulated into committing crimes” or simply being “in the wrong place at the wrong time” (Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 18), the woman’s re-presentation of solitary suffering again absolves her of any complicity in her supposed criminality; she is cast as a mere victim of circumstances and wrongdoing on behalf of the men in her life. Collectively these depictions of distress reify characterizations that forward a narrative of victimization because of the way in which they mark the women’s bodies with frailty and a sense of need.



Women fending for themselves in a shattered economy, many of them widowed in the violence, are increasingly drawn into criminal activity such as drug trafficking and kidnapping — which some may see as the only options available to support their families.

Slide 12: [No Caption]

The prison population increasingly includes young women who were coerced or manipulated into committing crimes — or women guilty simply of being with a boyfriend or family member in the wrong place at the wrong time.



Slide 18: [No Caption]

The second major rhetorical strategy, or visual references to sexuality, contributes to the narrative thread of victimization, by likewise invoking notions of fertility, but instead of fertility being a mark of hyper-sexuality, it demonstrates the women's enactment of 'proper' motherhood. An example of this strategy can be seen in the photograph on slide six, which is a documentary style shot of inmates with their children. The image appears to be candid—instead of looking directly at the camera or overtly appearing posed, gazes are averted into the distance or at one another, and many of the women are embracing their children. Just as was described in terms of vilification, the representation of women with young children references the women's fertility and sexuality, but this re-presentation of women "in caring relation to their children" (Finnegan, 2003, p. 100) also serves as a universal depiction of motherhood that removes these specific women from their historical contingency. By largely removing them from the context of the prison, their supposed criminality, and the Drug War more generally, a generalized portrait of feminine vulnerability is conveyed (see Jacobs, 2010), which is not only bound representationally to sexuality, but also to Westernized gendered ancestral narratives and archetypes.



**Slide 6: During the holiday season, children of the inmates are allowed to stay overnight.**

The usage of identical visual rhetorical strategies—references to Western gendered ancestral narratives and sexuality—to create the narrative threads of both victimization and vilification points to the complexity of such narratives within the piece at large. These strategies can be used to not only create narratives that appear to be in opposition to one another, but also to rhetorically construct and evoke that which comes along with such media narratives—sociocultural judgments and evaluations regarding racialized and gendered norms and boundaries. These narratives and their implications become further complex when not only considered in tandem within the piece, but also when they are at play together. The next section addresses these precariously ‘both’ images and narrative across the piece, and thus problematizes this dualism.

**Problematizing the Dualism—Both Victim and Villain**

Given the aforementioned narratives of victimization and vilification, the visual dichotomization of women within Orlinsky's (2011a) photographs largely performs in an overtly dualistic manner, but these are not the only rhetorical maneuvers at play. In this subsection I argue that there is an additional narrative at play in this slideshow, both in some of the individual photographs and across the slideshow when considered holistically, in which the women's characters are precariously positioned as both victim and villain simultaneously. This discussion therefore draws upon the rhetorical strategies explicated in the last section, but complicates them in terms of a third, paradoxical visual narrative that they construct.

Individual images that paradoxically embody both the victim and the villain narrative threads rhetorically do so in one of two ways—they either (1) display two women within one image where one is victimized and the other is vilified, or (2) display one woman whose visual composition and narrative simultaneously forward a victimizing and vilifying characterization. An example of the paradoxical dichotomization as spread across an image of two women can be seen in that of Claudia Ramírez Contreras and her sister, Eunice Ramírez (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 4). This is a medium shot of the two women outside of their prison cell against a stark white wall. They stand close together, both dressed in casual clothing—jeans and low-cut, form-fitting tops—with their arms in front of them. Despite the numerous similarities in their appearances and general body positions, the more binary differences emerge in the details. In terms of their facial expressions, Claudia's appearance disrupts idealized femininity—she has a furrowed brow, slightly squinting eyes, and pursed lips. Eunice on the other hand has a much more relaxed and softened expression. Another detail that contributes to each of their characters being constructed in opposition to one another is their hands. Eunice's hands are clasped together in a relaxed, unassuming manner, while Claudia's are more clenched and nervous as she appears to be

grasping at her left pointer finger with her right hand. Collectively, the sisters largely mirror one another while at the same time evoking both poles of the dichotomized woman because one appears generally unassuming while the other evokes a much more threatening characterization.



**Slide 4: Claudia Ramírez Contreras, 21, and her sister, Eunice Ramírez, 19, outside their prison cell. The women are accused of kidnapping.**

An even more striking example of the dichotomization being captured within a single image can be seen in a photograph that engages the second rhetorical strategy and instead of splitting the dichotomization across two women, engages the re-presentation of one woman to achieve both narrative ends. This paradoxical image is that of Nancy Lilia Núñez and her three-year-old daughter (Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 8). This photograph depicts Ms. Núñez and her daughter positioned against a bright white backdrop, as has been a common compositional feature across many of the photographs, and it is cropped close enough that, while it includes the child's torso and much of Ms. Núñez's body, the features of their faces are still clear. While Ms.

Núñez's face appears hardened like that of a vilified woman (see Zelizer, 2001), she has both of her hands placed on her daughter's shoulders in front of her. The daughter is tightly backed against her mother in what appears to be a position of complete trust. The placement of Ms. Núñez's hands appears both protective and nurturing; she is not grabbing or her restraining her daughter, but almost enveloping her comfortably. The incongruity between Ms. Núñez's face and her body language with her daughter is also complicated by the caption, which states that she "is in prison on a kidnapping charge." This caption mentions a disturbing crime, but does not offer a definite appraisal of her guilt or innocence, just a description of why she is there. Collectively, these elements rhetorically make Ms. Núñez both a villain (based on her personal appearance and potential crime) and a victim (based on her re-presentation that conforms to visual norms for idealized motherhood and the ambiguity of her guilt for committing a crime).



**Slide 8: Nancy Lilia Núñez, 22, and her daughter, Claudia Marlen, 3. Ms. Núñez is in prison on a kidnapping charge.**

Given images such as those of the sisters and Ms. Núñez with her daughter, it is important to also note that the paradox of women being silenced through simultaneous positioning as both victim and villain can be seen across the slideshow more holistically. More specifically, the juxtaposition of various images back-to-back that convey different narratives also contributes to this precarious representational bind. The first example of such juxtaposition can be seen between slides nine and 10, both of which re-present Karla Solorio. As previously addressed, slide nine depicts Ms. Solorio in the arts and crafts area of the prison while vilifying her through structuring the image around her visible pregnancy and thus active sexuality (see Finnegan, 2003, p. 149). Slide 10 on the other hand is a softened portrait of the same woman that casts her character as a victim due to her presentation of a seemingly vulnerable and approachable femininity. Ultimately Ms. Solorio inhabits the same sexualized female body in both photographs, but she is vilified for this femininity in one image and victimized by it in the other.



**Slide 10: Ms. Solorio, in prison for drugs and weapons trafficking.**



Another example of this juxtaposition can be seen between slides 13 and 14, which represent women who have been incarcerated for the same crimes but are visually positioned in very different ways. More specifically, these are the portrait style images of Abril Alvarado Ortega and Yazmín Mendoza, both of whom are incarcerated on drug trafficking charges. While Abril Alvarado's image re-presents her as hardened and threatening (e.g., furrowed brow, squinting eyes, and pursed lips), thus vilifying her for failing to perform acceptable femininity as dictated by Western gendered narratives (see Carlson, 1999; McKinnon, 2011), Yazmín Mendoza's image re-presents her as much more vulnerable and non-threatening (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slides 13-14). As they are viewed back-to-back within the slideshow, the viewer is again struck by a paradoxical evaluation of the re-presented women. Furthermore, due to the overt similarity in composition, as one clicks through the images, the women's faces can map onto one another. This visual mapping allows for the blurring of the narratives onto each other. These photographs on an individual and collective level speak into the problematic nature of the dichotomization of women in which women are not only representationally victimized and vilified, but they are also simultaneously positioned as both victim and villain.



**Slide 13: Abril Alvarado Ortega, 32, in prison for drug trafficking.**



**Slide 14: Yazmín Mendoza, 27, in prison for drug trafficking.**

The victimizing and vilifying portrayals in addition to the simultaneous positioning of the incarcerated women as both victim and villain all collectively contribute to a the silencing of the women that are re-presented. These women are silenced both visually and narratively because the rhetorical strategies used to construct and evaluate their characterizations and narratives impose Western ancestral narratives upon them. Thus the re-presented women of Orlinsky's (2011a) "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" rhetorically (re)construct visual narratives that encapsulate the silencing bind described by McKinnon (2011) in which non-U.S. women are both "too meek" and "too scandalous" to speak in public. Although they occupy a public space in that their images are circulating in a mainstream American news venue, there is still a lack of voice because an ancestral gendered framework is used to craft and make sense of these images. There is no re-presentation that strikes a middle ground within Orlinsky's (2011a) photo slideshow because even the paradoxical victim/villain re-presentation is an embodiment of two essentializing extremes and representative of the narrative need to neatly categorize despite the fact that such neat categorizations are largely incongruous with reality (see Smith, 1999). Collectively, the way in which the visual narratives of the Mexican women in Orlinsky's (2011a) piece are rhetorically constructed is therefore informative about American cultural judgments. Because of the way in which the rhetorical workings of these images draw upon ancestral narratives that are mutable and able to be appropriated across time (Carlson, 2009; McKinnon, 2011), the judgments made about these images pertain not only to the women who are explicitly re-presented, but they also can be illuminating in regards to the intersections between our gendered discourses and theorizing of nation as they are articulated within our national social imaginary and processes of collective memory. In the next two chapters I take up these

intersections, thereby delving further into the rhetorical workings of Orlinsky's (2011a) images and the sociocultural processes that shape the contours of the way we think about nation.

## CHAPTER III

## U.S. AS NATION

Borders, whether ideational or material, by no means function in one direction (Nagel, 2003). The policing, construction, and maintenance of the borders and boundaries of nation, both literally and figuratively by the state and citizens collectively, can be a means of reinforcing social hegemony and cohesion amongst “us” against “them” (Flores, 2003; Nagel, 2003; see also DeChaine, 2012). Likewise, re-presentations of non-U.S. women do not function rhetorically in one direction, but can function in a variety of directions, thus shaping discourses of nation and impacting those who are re-presented, those whom the re-presentations serve as a visual synecdoche for,<sup>11</sup> and those who produce and consume the re-presentations (see Nagel, 2003).

The multidirectionality of the borders and boundaries of nation is inextricably connected to collective memory (see Olick, 2007; Olick & Robbins, 1998). Much scholarly work on the rhetorical functions and constructions of nation has thus looked at collective memory in terms of representations and practices “produced in the service of solidifying the sense of belonging of a group as well as to a disembodied frame of reference—part of a society’s unique cultural essence—for the community’s shared ‘imagining’ of itself” (Olick, 2007, p. 86; see also Anderson, 2006). While bound to one another, the relationship between memory and identity in the form of nation is not easily demarcated; as noted by Michael Rothberg (2009), “Memories are not owned by groups—nor are groups ‘owned’ by memories. Rather, the borders of memory and identity are jagged; what looks at first like my own property often turns out to be a

borrowing or adaptation from a history that initially might seem foreign or distant” (p. 5). Put simply, collective memory is employed in “articulating national boundaries and establishing the legitimacy of national principles” (Olick, 2007, p. 86) particularly as they pertain to complex understandings of collective identity.

In order to explore the boundaries of nation as rhetorically (re)constructed by Orlinsky’s (2011a) “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized,” this chapter and the next engage a process-relational framework of collective memory. I argue the images of “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” (Orlinsky, 2011a) not only rhetorically establish and negotiate external sociocultural boundaries while participating in the theorizing of Mexico as nation, but they also engage many of the same visual rhetorical strategies to reflect inwards and (re)construct the U.S. as nation. This chapter thus begins the process of explicating the rhetorical workings of these boundaries by delineating the way in which a process-relational understanding of collective memory rhetorically participates in the theorizing of nation and gazing inwards to examine how the visual rhetorical constructions of Orlinsky’s (2011a) piece engage such a memory framework in the theorizing of the United States as nation. This chapter subsequently employs the visual rhetoric of Orlinsky’s (2011a) photographs, Olick’s (2007) process-relational collective memory, and discourses about crime and criminality in the United States to examine internal boundaries and disentangle how these photos and their visual narratives rhetorically participate in the American social imaginary and collective memory processes such that they also facilitate the theorizing of the United States as nation. These next two chapters therefore contain the primary intersectional pieces of this thesis where visual rhetoric and narratives, theorizing of nation, and a process-relational understanding of collective memory are articulated through Orlinsky’s (2011a) “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized.”

This chapter will take on a threefold organizational pattern: first, I sketch Olick's (2007) process-relational collective memory framework. This discussion builds on the review and primary assumptions enumerated in the introduction chapter while devoting greater attention to connections to nation and what this framework highlights in regards to my primary text—Orlinsky's (2011a) "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized." Secondly, I delineate the larger national discourses of crime and criminality that widely circulate in mainstream American culture and particularly the media such that the ways in which these popular discourses are interwoven with collective memory process, and thus theorizing of nation, are explicated. Thirdly, I put these crime and criminality discourses (and their accompanying memory processes) into conversation with the rhetoric and visual narratives of Orlinsky's (2011a) piece in order to nuance what these images communicate about the United States as nation.

### **Process-Relational Memory**

The scholarship that bridges work on collective memory and nationalism has provided immense insight into the rhetorical functions of memory and especially memory artifacts (see Olick, 2007; Olick & Robbins, 1998), but this body of work is also largely marked by concern for memory's instrumentality. As outlined in the introduction chapter, a more thoroughly process-relational orientation to collective memory asks largely different questions than those asked by the aforementioned body of scholarship (Olick, 2007). Olick (2007) explains this difference as a shift from asking the instrumental question of "what memory does for the group" to asking "what the group does for memory" (p. 87). In other words, the shift is from understanding memory as a tool to understanding it as that which defies simple categorization while encompassing contexts, objects, and processes.

Methodologically, Olick's (2007) framework therefore moves beyond attending primarily to memory artifacts to teasing apart 'figurations of memory' (p. 91). Understanding figurations of memory—or field, medium, genre, and profile—includes “developing relations between past and present—where images, contexts, traditions, and interests come together in fluid, though not necessarily harmonious ways” (p. 91). Furthermore, Olick (2007) argues, “figuration preserves fluidity and calls attention to ongoing structuration and practice” (p. 91). This framework is therefore well suited to the purposes of thesis because it does not deny attention to memory artifacts, like the photograph, but it does not end its inquiry with their assertion as texts that play a role in our collective remembering (and forgetting). Alternatively, it puts these artifacts into conversation with other rhetorically significant discourses, histories, and practices.

The first of Olick's (2007) figurations of memory that advances this intertextual conversation is field. While the concept of field has been theorized to mean many different things, within the framework of collective memory as I adopt in this thesis, Olick (2007) quotes Pierre Bourdieu's work to state, “Field may be defined as a network or configuration, of objective relations between positions” (Olick, 2007, p. 93).<sup>12</sup> Field thus calls forth the need for the critic to look at images in context (Olick, 2007). In the case of this analysis, the field of the mainstream news media is not only relevant, but the fields of American politics, the criminal justice system, and public opinion also reverberate through this discussion.<sup>13</sup>

The second figuration of memory, medium, is defined by Olick (2007) as “the representational forms through which memory mediates experience” (p. 98). Attention to medium therefore allows the rhetorical critic to tap into the wealth of literature that conceives of collective memory in terms of artifacts and instrumentality, while also decentering this work such that it is just one piece of the larger puzzle. The mediation of memory is central to this



figuration; “Media of memory are definitive of and not merely secondary to the message; these media are fluid forms, inextricable from, and changing with, the message they carry; remembering is an ongoing process of mediation rather than of storage and retrieval” (Olick, 2007, p. 98). This means attending to the visual and more specifically the photographic nature of “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” (Orlinsky, 2011a), as extensively done in the second chapter, is paramount to understanding how these images rhetorically function within processes of memory.

Closely related to the figuration of medium is that of genre. Genres draw attention to the way memories are fluid throughout time, which disrupts a purely linear understanding (Olick, 2007). Instead of thinking of genres across some sort of artificially imposed timeline, Olick (2007) argues, “Genres, rather, are practical types defined ‘by the object, the goal, and the situation of the utterance’. Genres are historical constructs, the results of ‘a continuous and generative process [...]’” (p. 106). By thinking of genres in terms of accumulation yet fluidity across time, the rhetorical critic must also attend to memory’s intertextuality; “The production and reception of memory occur through the textuality of memory, which is comprehensible only by attending to its intertextuality with other issues and earlier memories” (Olick, 2007, p. 104). In the case of Orlinsky’s (2011a) images, a variety of genres can be seen to coalesce within photojournalism (which is in and of itself a genre of journalism)—portraiture, documentary photography, and black and white photography to name a few.

Lastly, the figuration of memory that truly draws the entire processual framework together is that of profile; “Attention to profile points out the total relations of field, media, and genres—the figurations of memory” (Olick, 2007, p. 109). The term ‘profile’ is used to refer to political meaning systems and is described by Olick (2007) in the following way:

I use the concept of profile to describe the unique contours, more and less smooth, of political meaning systems at given points in time. These comprise diverse meaning elements, including images of the past, identitarian claims, rhetorical styles, attributions of present responsibility, policy characterizations, types of heroes, styles, sense of inside and outside, moral and practical purposes, and procedures. (p. 108)

In this sense, in order to attend to the way photojournalistic narratives, like those of “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” (Orlinsky, 2011a), rhetorically function within a process-relational understanding of collective memory, the rhetorical critic must also look at the way the images relate to and are interwoven with geopolitics. This dimension of process-relational collective memory also disrupts the common understanding of ‘the culture of memory’ (as previously outlined) that views collective memory as somehow/sometimes being a “clearly demarcated object in political cultures” (Olick, 2007, p. 107). Alternatively, thinking of collective memory in terms of the relationality of profiles implies a view of memory “as part of more general relations of meanings and within historical conjunctures as well” (Olick, 2007, p. 107). In sum, consideration for profiles facilitates an understanding of photojournalistic images as “wholes greater than the sum of the parts” (Olick, 2007, p. 108), for they are intertwined with geopolitical discourses within rhetorically significant fluid and relational meaning systems.

All together, Olick’s (2007) process-relational theorizing of collective memory forwards the assumption that to understand the ways in which memory participates in the theorizing of nation, one must look to not only artifacts of memory, but also to the contexts in which they are situated, the histories that contribute to them (both in terms of medium and genre), and the deeply political meaning systems that permeate time. This framework therefore disrupts any notions of collective memory and nation as clearly demarcated and methodologically calls for the rhetorical critic to be open to bringing together diverse conversations. It is these conversations that the following section unpacks.

### **Discourses of Crime & Criminality in American Culture**

American society has long been marked by a cultural fascination with crime and criminality (Rawlinson, 2009; Smith, 1999). Most notably, Americans have collectively generated an extensive visual discourse on crime and criminality by engaging in a photographic process of identifying and cataloging crimes and criminal characters, or those who are socially rejected and deemed a threat (Rawlinson, 2009; see also Sekula 1986; Smith, 1999). For example, this visual discourse can be seen in the police archive of mug shots, Bertillonage identification images, and Galton's composite portraits of "pictorial averages" (Smith, 1999).<sup>14</sup> These photographs are not only regarded as evidence (Sontag, 1977), but they embody a dualism where criminality is simultaneously contained/captured in a visual record and able to spread through potentially infinite reproduction (Rawlinson, 2009). In regards to the field of the mainstream media, the reproduction of these photographs can often facilitate a sensationalism of crime, which serves to further our cultural obsession with crime and punishment; as stated by Rawlinson (2009), in addition to calling for the audience to narrativize them, these images quintessentially invite us "to look again and enjoy the voyeuristic spectacle of a hidden and secret world beyond our everyday lives" (p. 138). In essence, while our cultural absorption with crime is nothing new, the evolution of the mainstream media allows us to satisfy our voyeuristic needs more than ever.

The flourishing of American society's voyeuristic narrative fascination with crime can be explicitly seen in the expanding presence of crime and deviance narratives in the American mainstream media and pop culture (Deutschmann, 2003; Rawlinson, 2009; see also Sacco, 2003). Not only are these narratives increasingly prevalent, but they are also commonly given great prominence within media sense making. As stated by Sacco (2003):

Citizens' personal troubles with crime provide the building blocks out of which public issues are constructed. [...] The news media, in particular, provide an important forum in which private troubles are selectively gathered up, invested with broader meaning, and made available for public consumption. (p. 35)

The "hidden and secret world" that Rawlinson (2009) referred to is therefore a largely narrative entity that has not only captured our visual imaginations on a personal level but also on a socio-cultural and collective level that impacts the way we come to understand many public issues (see Sacco, 2003).

**Representations of death.** Within American culture's crime related photographic repository, there is a notable genre of representations that pertain to death. The mainstream news media often engages these representations of death to communicate cultural narratives of crisis (see Jacobs, 2010; Zelizer, 2001). For example, World War II news media coverage of German war crimes commonly featured re-presentations of deceased women en masse (Zelizer, 2001). This linkage between representations of death and narratives of crisis facilitates sense making not only in the voyeuristic way described by Rawlinson (2009) and Sacco (2003), but it also taps into a very specific archive of iconic imagery, thereby invoking collective memory processes that slip across other moments of cultural crisis and their accompanying narratives (see Zelizer, 2004).

The archive of iconic representations of death contains not only the images of those who are dead, which tend to be generally re-presented as anonymous and indistinguishable masses as in the World War II example (Jacobs, 2010, Zelizer, 2001; see also Malkki, 1996), but this archive also contains images of those who are still living in their 'about-to-die' moment (see Zelizer, 2004). The representation of the 'about-to-die' moment is rooted in Crucifixion imagery (Zelizer, 2004). As described by Zelizer (2004):

Seen in many instances as the preferred version of death's representation, the final moment before death can be traced as an enduring trope in one of the classic representations of civilization—the Crucifixion. [...] In such images, Christ is portrayed as still alive and suffering rather than already dead, and the moment before his death is positioned as the preferred way of depicting death itself, death's opposite being used as its stand-in. (p. 166)

Given the iconicity and endurance across time of images of the Crucifixion, visualizing death with the depiction of someone still alive is an aesthetic choice that communication scholars, such as Barbie Zelizer (2004), are able to trace across a wide variety of mediums.

Regarding their place in photojournalism, 'about-to-die' images are extremely prevalent. Zelizer (2004) explains:

[P]hotographic depictions of the about-to-die moment have literally cluttered the repository of photojournalism's high moments. Collections of the iconic images of photojournalism have long included versions of the about-to-die moment, where photojournalistic images have focused on the final moment before death, actual or presumed. Such images fill our collective memory [...]. (p. 168)

Given their prevalence, both in terms of iconic tropes and sheer volume in contemporary media, these images rhetorically function by tapping into Barthes' (1977c) third meaning (see also Zelizer, 2004). As described in the literature review of the introduction chapter, this third meaning rhetorically hinges on a sense of contingency (Barthes, 1977c; Zelizer, 2004). Rhetorically, these images therefore work in a manner similar to the narrative response elicited by the aforementioned crime and criminality images in that there is a potentiality which viewers embrace and project a variety of endings upon while invoking other sense making frameworks (Zelizer, 2004). Regardless of the volume of 'about-to-die' moments we are exposed to, the contingency upon which they rhetorically function endures—"a subjunctive [read contingent] response to the horrors they embody persists too, lingering as messages of contingency at a point where contingency may no longer be the optimum response to the events of mass destruction depicted in these images" (Zelizer, 2004, p. 180). Furthermore, the persistence of contingency

within our collective memory processes “suggests that we often willingly engage in a kind of irrational game-playing with what we see, projecting altered ends on the screens through which we see” (Zelizer, 2004, p. 180).

Aside from being significant in terms of rhetorical function, this contingency is also what creates room for considering Orlinsky’s (2011a) images within the realm of representations of death. Death for those re-presented in “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” (Orlinsky, 2011a) may not be imminent in the same way as it is for say those re-presented in photojournalism that covers crises like famine,<sup>15</sup> but notions of death permeate Drug War discourses because of the emphasis on violence and the ugly underbelly of illicit drug trade (see Shirk, 2011). In the context of this analysis, representations of death thus embrace the potential and the actual and could be interpreted such that death is something the re-presented women potentially face due to their supposed involvement in the Drug War.

**American penal system discourses.** In addition to the image repository of crime and criminality and representations of death within the mainstream media and pop culture, the American penal system is a closely related narrative entity. The narrativity of the penal system can be understood in two ways. First, the American criminal justice system itself is organized around narratives and storytelling; for example, trials are often decided on the perceived validity of one’s narratives (Carlson, 2009; see also Carlson, 1999; McKinnon 2009, 2011). Secondly, the larger cultural discourses surrounding the criminal system, such as those about the severity of certain crimes and criminal rehabilitation, are also steeped in narrative (Carlson, 2009). These narratives often contain binaries—normal versus abnormal, good versus bad, legal versus illegal, moral versus immoral, guilty versus not guilty, and us versus them—which are the foundation

for rejection and criminal conviction or supposed assimilation back into mainstream society (Jamieson, 1995; Rawlinson, 2009).

In addition to these binaries, binary discourses about rights, needs, and desires are at the forefront of penal system discourses (Haney, 2010). These three interwoven constructs stem from discourses about dependency, which were especially prevalent in the 1990s (Haney, 2010). The central narratives of the dependency discourses revolve around cultural fears regarding racially and socioeconomically marginalized women's dependency on government resources and services (e.g. stories of mothers on welfare who will never be self sufficient because of the dependency they have on the state, see Adams & Padmasee, 2001; Haney, 2010). These narratives and the cultural fear associated with them made an imprint on the penal system in which it was believed that problems of dependency could be managed through the regulation of individuals' narratives about rights, needs, and desires (Haney, 2010).

More specifically, within penal system narratives of self two shifts in framing commonly occur— (1) rights become framed as needs, and (2) needs become framed as desires (Haney, 2010). Once again, these narratives do not allow for a spectrum of relationships between constructs, but a binary is established between rights and needs or needs and desires. For example, in relation to the rights-to-needs shift, one's narrative would change from "I am an incarcerated mother and therefore have the right to state assistance," to "I am an incarcerated mother and therefore need state assistance." Because in the latter narrative, assistance is a need but not a right, the terms of its fulfillment are negotiable (between the one receiving and state), and there is no presumption that assistance will/could continue indefinitely. In the case of needs becoming desires, the narrative shift would look like the following: "I thought I needed state assistance, but now I see that I just desired it because of my addiction to unhealthy relationships

in which I am not independent. These desires have resulted in my incarceration.” In this shift mistaken needs are framed as obstacles to independence, but desires are something that inmates can free themselves from (see Haney, 2010). Collectively these narrative shifts place emphasis on one’s character as opposed to social context and other factors largely beyond one’s control.

From the aforementioned examples, it is evident that both narrative shifts also call for an exposure and explanation of one’s character. The current penal system, and especially nontraditional state-hybrid facilities that pull funding from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), often espouse a “therapeutic” discourse that emphasizes this exposure of self and the aforementioned narrative shifts (Haney, 2010). By deeming these discourses as therapeutic, it is implied that penal institutions that adopt these reform strategies are “healing” some sort of disorder that afflicts criminal women, such as confusion over rights, needs, and desires. Incarcerated women are often repeatedly told that their problems are due to flaws in character, which rhetorically manifest as confusion over rights, needs, and desires, and they learn to retell their narratives in ways that reframe these constructs (Haney, 2010).

For incarcerated women, new narratives that explain one’s character carry performative expectations that are largely regulated by the state and can be used to unite and/or divide inmates for varying purposes (Haney, 2010). For example, in Haney’s (2010) study of two community-based institutions where incarcerated mothers could carry out their sentences with their children, the narrative expectations of one institution (unintentionally) allowed for the women to unite in their resistance against those running the facility and petition the state for “better” treatment. In the other facility the norms for narrative performance elicited a feeling of constant surveillance among the women, and exposure of one’s “true” character became a source of competition between inmates, ultimately leading to their isolation and division (Haney, 2010). From this



study, the discussion of narrative shifts in needs, rights, and desires, other penal system narrative binaries, and the increasing news media attention devoted to criminality, it is evident that narratives about crime, punishment, and imprisonment can have both material and ideational consequences for individuals, particularly when these narratives revolve around dimensions of character. These consequences are especially relevant to lives of women since they are the fastest growing segment of the incarcerated population (Haney, 2010) and the ones whose bodies are most often used to tell cultural narratives of crisis (Jacobs, 2010; see also Del Zotto, 2002).<sup>16</sup>

Mainstream American discourses of crime and criminality are intimately connected to a process-relational understanding of collective memory and theorizing of nation as manifest in the visual because of the way narratives speak across all of these constructs. Images of crime and criminality and related representations of death elicit a narrative response (Rawlinson, 2009; Zelizer, 2004). This means that we make sense of crime-related images by asking questions regarding plot (i.e. what sequence of events occurred and how will this sequence culminate), character (i.e. who was involved) and context, and then judge these narratives on their probability and fidelity (Fisher 1984; 1985). For example, when the news media shows images of a crime scene, the audience narrativizes these images by trying to reconstruct what happened, who was involved, and whether or not these stories jive with the images and cultural norms and expectations. In the case of the ‘about-to-die’ moment, the audience asks how has this person lived their life and how might this person’s story end. In regards to the American penal system, many of the same questions are asked, but framed around discourses of rights, needs, and desires (see Haney, 2010). In all of the aforementioned examples, there are narrative responses, expectations, and judgments made on behalf of the audience that invoke collective memory processes by tapping into specific genres of crime discourses and mediums associated with these

genres, traversing the fields of the mainstream media, pop culture, and criminal system, and invoking the multifold profiles that make sense of these interconnected memory artifacts, contexts, and processes.

### **“Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” & the U.S. as Nation**

Given the survey of these discourses, it becomes evident that in Orlinsky’s (2011a) photographs the re-presented women’s characters and narratives rhetorically facilitate viewer engagement in collective memory processes and thus the theorizing of nation. One of the primary ways in which these images participate in these processes is by tapping into the iconic imagery and narratives of said discourses that are part of the American social imaginary in such a way that rhetorically establishes and negotiates internal sociocultural boundaries and thus notions of the United States as nation.

In this section I explicate the rhetorical maneuvers Orlinsky’s (2011a) “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” photographs make while tapping into collective memory process and the theorizing of nation. These rhetorical maneuvers are delineated in terms of both visual rhetorical strategies and narrative rhetorical strategies. While the second chapter demonstrated the ways in which the visual can be narrativized in the case of photojournalism, and thus the visual can run across narratives and narratives likewise can run across the visual, I argue that it is useful to distinguish between the two in this section in order to truly disentangle *how* they rhetorically function as opposed to just enumerating their content. Furthermore, it is useful to distinguish between the two because as seen in the review of crime and criminality discourses, there are some genres within these fields that are visual, such as the representations of death, while others largely take on a different discursive form, such as the therapeutic narratives of the penal system.

**Visual rhetorical strategies.** This sub section enumerates the visual rhetorical strategies invoked by Orlinsky's (2011a) "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" images and explicates how these strategies function within collective memory processes and the theorizing of nation. More specifically, this sub section places Orlinsky's (2011a) photographs within the aforementioned crime and criminality archives to explore how they function in terms of, first, the police archive of mug shots, and secondly, representations of death. By situating "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" (Orlinsky, 2011a) within these visual representational genres, I nuance the ways in which the photographic medium rhetorically operates within photojournalism and other sociocultural fields of sense making.

As mentioned, images of those who are socially rejected and deemed a threat for their supposed involvement in the societal underworld of criminality have been extensively archived (Rawlinson, 2009; Smith, 1999; see also Sekula, 1986). Within the processes of criminal cataloging, one of the most commonly generated images is that of the mug shot (see Rawlinson, 2009). What American society knows today as the photographic mug shot stems from the nineteenth century work of Alphonse Bertillion, who was the director of the Identification Bureau of the Paris Prefecture of Police (Smith, 1999). As noted by Smith (1999), "By the turn of the century, Bertillionage had been adopted enthusiastically by the U.S. penal system and was utilized by almost every police station in the country" (p. 70). Bertillion's images "codified a system of documentation designed to measure and record the criminal body, [and were] based entirely on the documentation of salient physical features" (Smith, 1999, p. 70). In essence, it was the introduction of this type of physical cataloging that facilitated the cultural notion that criminality took on a specific type of embodiment. Given this history, it is fitting that one of the

visual rhetorical strategies a piece covering incarcerated women would engage would be that of the archetypal mug shot.

Of all of the photographs that comprise “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” (Orlinsky, 2011a), those that compositionally reference the archetypal mug shot most are the portrait style images (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, and 17). Within Orlinsky’s (2011a) piece, there are eight images that conform compositionally to the traditional American mug shot and thus rhetorically function as a part of this larger genre of criminal representation. Of these eight images, there are both close-ups and medium shots. The close-ups re-present María Sol Zocoro, Anabel Rodríguez, Karla Solorio, Abril Alvarado Ortega, Yazmín Mendoza, and Laura Érika Mar (slides 5, 7, 10, 13, 14, and 17 respectively), all of whom have been convicted of either homicide, weapons trafficking, or drug trafficking. Both women in the medium shots, Julia Fragozo and Manuela Angélica Muñoz (slides 11 and 16 respectively), have also been convicted of drug trafficking. These portraits particularly resemble mug shots because of the way in which their direct, front on angle highlights the intricate features of the women’s faces against a stark white background, and they contain a brief caption that presents the women’s name, age, and alleged crime(s) (see Rawlinson, 2009 and Smith, 1999, pp. 82-84 for examples of traditional American style mug shots of similar composition).



**Slide 5: María Sol Zocoro, 42, in prison for homicide.**



**Slide 7: Anabel Rodríguez, 30, in prison for drug trafficking.**



**Slide 11: Julia Fragozo, 28, in prison for drug trafficking.**



**Slide 16: Manuela Angélica Muñoz, 21, in prison for drug trafficking.**



**Slide 17: Laura Érika Mar, 23, in prison for homicide.**

Because of the way the mug shot has been conceived by the American penal system and eventually society at large (see Smith, 1999), these photos present themselves as encapsulated records of the characters within the larger story of women and Drug War criminality in Mexico. As argued by Sekula (1986), “The individual only existed as an individual by being identified. Individuality as such had no meaning. Viewed ‘objectively’, the self occupied a position that was wholly relative” (p. 34; see also Smith, 1999, p. 71). In this sense, the mug shot rhetorically marks the individual as a criminal but also strips the individual of a sense of self and uses their re-presentation in the service of identifying the group—criminals. Smith (1999) reinforces this notion and states, this photographic archive has been “one of the principle mechanisms for establishing identity in the United States” (p. 71). While in many ways seemingly individual, this identity formation is actually a thoroughly collective endeavor.

In terms of compositional conformity to the traditional American mug shot, the women's pleas in regards to their charges are not disclosed. Withholding this type of information from their re-presentations is in accordance with the data presented along with standard American mug shots, such as age and crime (see Rawlinson, 2009). Their reason(s) for incarceration are thus presented in a definitive manner where large portions of their stories are potentially suppressed. An example of such narrative brevity can be seen in the following caption—"María Sol Zocoro, 42, in prison for homicide" (Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 5). While the format of this piece of news media undoubtedly places restrictions on the amount of text that can be published with each photograph, the ways in which these captions hark back to that of the traditional American mug shot and largely oversimplify the characters and stories of those whom they re-present is palpable while speaking into visual discourses that have traditionally been used to categorize those deemed undesirable and on the fringes of society.

Within "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" (Orlinsky, 2011a), as each character is presented, the ways in which their re-presentations complicate the archetypal mug shot becomes more apparent. On one hand the mug shot style of these photos harks back to the desire for photojournalistic images to embody qualities of forensic objectivity to the point of almost being anti-aesthetic (Rawlinson, 2009), but on the other hand the women's expressions are anything but stark and anti-aesthetic. The typical American mug shot re-presents a seemingly emotionless "record" of one's physical appearance (see Rawlinson, 2009), but the "mug shots" of these women are permeated by emotion. Ultimately while their portrait style composition mimics that of traditional American mug shot photography, these re-presentations are rhetorically the antithesis of American mug shots because of the intense emotion they also portray.



Ultimately, both the compositional conformity to and violation of the archetypal mug shot rhetorically contribute to the reification of Westernized, binary gendered portrayals in which these women are both victimized and vilified. Aside from the way in which the sterile portrait captions vilify the women by condensing the innumerable factors surrounding their incarceration down to a singular (socially undesirable) conviction, the very way in which the women's faces are displayed also contributes to this binary narrative thread. As noted, the way in which the women's faces are re-presented violates the composition of the traditional American mug shot because of their intense emotional displays. More specifically, many of the depictions of these women display deeply furrowed brows, squinting eyes (both upper and lower lids appearing tightly drawn), and pursed lips, all of which collectively evoke a sense of hostility, distrust, and anger. On the other hand, there are also mug shot-esque images that are visually softened (i.e. no deeply furrowed brows or markers of hostility, but instead relaxed eyes and mouths, some lips even slightly upturned (see slides 7, 10, and 14)) and do not visually cast the women as hostile, dangerous characters. These visually softened depictions thus rhetorically tap into the archive of the mug shot, but also create room for a victimizing characterization by emotionally disrupting the conventions of the archetypal criminal record in a way that does not evoke the feelings typically associated with criminality. Put simply, while many of the portrait style images in Orlinsky's (2011a) "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" draw on the rhetorical conventions of the photographic archive of the mug shot, these images also contain immense narrative potentiality for the way in which they also disrupt the very same conventions in both positively and negatively emotionally charged ways.

Given the context of incarceration, the Drug War, and the death and violence associated with these two major fields and related profiles, representations of death serve as a fitting second

major rhetorical strategy within “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” (Orlinsky, 2011a) for participating in collective memory processes. This second major visual strategy is engaged by Orlinsky’s (2011a) images through the depiction of incarcerated women in reflection (see slides 15 and 18). Because of the iconic imagery that has shaped the aesthetic conventions for the ‘about-to-die’ representations of death, “one’s final moment [is seen] as crucially important, as it is assumed to offer a playback of one’s life in which one’s entire life flashes by in an instant” (Zelizer, 2004, p. 165). This playback is visually depicted as a moment of reflection: “Individuals are often seen reflecting on personal accomplishments and failures at the moment they are about to die” (Zelizer, 2004, pp. 165-166). While the reflection of someone literally lying on their deathbed would compositionally look different than that of the women in El Cereso prison (i.e. there are no loved ones surrounding them in their depicted moment of need; see Zelizer, 2004, pp. 166-167), for their ‘about-to-die’ embodiment is less literal, both engage depictions of someone in seemingly isolated contemplation.

Within Orlinsky’s (2011a) piece, the most pointed example of a representation of death can be seen in slide 18, which re-presents a woman seemingly alone sitting on a row of sinks. The woman appears to be in a state of emotional distress, eyes slightly downturned and wiping at her face as if to brush away tears. Photographically captured alone and in such a reflective pose of mourning, her narrative is frozen and the viewer is left to hypothesize about the numerous ways in which her character could go. It is this ‘frozenness’ of a deeply personal moment in one’s life that speaks into both iconic representations of death and Orlinsky’s (2011a) images (see Zelizer, 2004). Especially in terms of photographic ‘about-to-die’ moments, representations of death rhetorically hinge upon contingency and function through being recycled and reconstructed in our collective memory processes. Zelizer argues (2004), “it is their frozen

motion that makes each image so striking, offering us [...] what may in fact set visual representation and particularly the still moment apart from other modes of representation” (p. 167). Furthermore, moments of contingency are recycled in collective memory processes—“The ‘as if’ is what gets recycled—on posters, collectors’ volumes, photographic yearbooks. Subjunctivity, then, becomes a voice or trope through which to remember” (Zelizer, 2004, p. 167). Put simply, Orlinsky’s (2011a) images compositionally tap into iconic representations of death via this frozen moment, and thus particular tropes that comprise part of our national social imaginary, but because the re-presented women are not literally facing impending death in the depicted moment there is even greater room for contingency; while representations of death already invite a game-play where we think of conclusions other than death, these women potentially still have much more of their life story to enact than in the typical ‘about-to-die’ moment representation.

Collectively, Orlinsky’s (2011a) piece engages two primary visual rhetorical strategies that connect the photographs of the El Cereso inmates with other contemporary discourses of criminality, thereby tapping into collective memory processes via the fields, genres, mediums, and profiles that shape American sense making of crime. Through the compositional similarities to the archetypal mug shot and representations of death in the form of ‘about-to-die’ moments, Orlinsky’s (2011a) images become imbricated with other collective memory processes, discourses, and artifacts.

**Narrative rhetorical strategies.** As discussed in the introduction and demonstrated by the last sub section, narrative rhetorical strategies are often bound to visual rhetorical strategies when theorizing about collective memory processes through the medium of photojournalism. This subsection addresses the specific narrative rhetorical strategies engaged and evoked by

Orlinsky's (2011a) "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized." Because this text is a piece of photojournalism, these narrative rhetorical strategies often point back to visual dimensions of the photo slideshow. Despite this, this sub section is distinct from the last in that it does not revolve around how the visual comprises certain narratives, but how these narratives operate within the piece more holistically and how these narratives tap into the larger sociocultural discourses outlined in the last section, such as those of the American penal system.

First, Orlinsky's (2011a) photographs engage penal system therapeutic narratives that circulate in popular discourses and the American national social imaginary, by narrativizing the incarcerated women with their children. Within the photo slideshow, women are explicitly portrayed with their children in four images (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 1, 6, 8, and 15), pregnant in one image (see slide 9), and children are depicted seemingly alone in the prison in another image (see slide 20). Collectively this means over a fourth of the images within the piece at large are somehow representationally related to children. The sheer visual presence of children throughout this much of the piece makes them a central factor in how the women of El Cereso are narrativized by these photographs.

Rhetorically, it is not just the depiction of children that engages penal system therapeutic narratives, and thus the national social imaginary and collective memory processes, but it is the way in which these children impact the narrative threads of the slide show. More specifically, the visual presence of children reinforces narrative tensions that call into question the women's characters as mothers based on conformity to or violation of American gendered norms for motherhood. As described in chapter two, contemporary American gendered norms for motherhood are highly idealized and dictate that women be not only devoted to the family, but particularly attentive to their children to the point at which they are constantly present and

attentive to their children's every need (Hochschild, 2003; Ridgeway, 2011). Slide six embodies the tension between these Western narratives and norms for motherhood and the story of motherhood told in Orlinsky's (2011a) images by re-presenting a group of women with their children outside and stating, "During the holiday season, children of the inmates are allowed to stay overnight." The women of slide six are embracing their children and appear thoroughly attentive, thus offering an "acceptable" presentation of motherhood, but they are also in prison and the caption informs the audience that were it not a holiday season, these mothers would not be allowed this time with their children. This rhetorically sets up a tension where the desires of the mothers to be with their children, their rights to parent their children while incarcerated, and the needs of both the women and the children to be together are called into question. For example, one narrative regarding their motherhood pre-incarceration would have been that they have a right to raise their children, but their characterization as criminals has now introduced other narratives that shift this bond from one that is a right between mother and child to a need—the women need to get their lives back on track to be there for their children; the women need to accept that their desire to provide for their family was mistaken as a need to get involved in the Drug War; and the needs of their children to be raised in "suitable" contexts/families (i.e. not within prison walls) are not being met until they can shift their own narratives, and subsequently characters, in the directions proscribed by the Westernized sociocultural discourses they are being read against.

Secondly, these images speak into Westernized gendered narratives and penal system narratives by narrativizing the women in terms of their relationships with men. Within the Western gendered ancestral spheres narrative, men are positioned as the agentic characters whose bodies are permitted to inhabit public spaces, while women are primarily relegated to the

home under the surveillance of the men in their lives, such as fathers, brothers, and husbands (Hochschild, 2003; McKinnon, 2011; see also Blair-Loy, 2003; Carlson, 1991, 2009). By explicitly re-presenting children and offering statements like “The prison population increasingly includes young women who were coerced or manipulated into committing crimes—or women guilty simply of being with a boyfriend or family member in the wrong place at the wrong time” (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 18), the photo slideshow rhetorically calls forth men as agentic characters in the shaping of these women’s narratives of self. Therefore, the plot of the women’s stories of criminality are not marked by their own agency and individuality, but by their relationality to men in terms of the heteronormative family structure.

Thirdly, Orlinsky’s (2011a) photographs engage collective memory processes through narrative rhetorical strategies by crafting stories that have potentiality in the form of discursive shifts in rights, needs, and desires, and in terms of plot conclusions. This narrative potentiality is rhetorically constructed by the ways in which the women’s stories appear ‘frozen’. As discussed in terms of the way in which they engage the visual trope of the ‘about-to-die’ moment, these narratives stick at a point that leaves much of the story untold. As put by Zelizer (2004), “the image tells the story of what happened at a point just before the end of its unfolding” (p. 167). This partial plot also conforms to what Lucaites and Condit’s (1985) conception of a rhetorical narrative: “the rhetorical narrative is functionally constrained to stop short of the formal stage of plot ‘resolution’ by virtue of its purpose to encourage audience enactment” (p. 100). Therefore the frozenness and lack of explicit plot resolution in the narratives of Orlinsky’s (2011a) images is not only what facilitates a sense of contingency, allowing for potential shifts in rights, needs, and desires in addition to a variety of hypothetical conclusions, but is also what makes these narratives thoroughly rhetorical.

## Conclusion

The photographs of “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” (Orlinsky, 2011a) engage both visual and narrative rhetorical strategies that invoke tropes like that of the archetypal mug shot and ‘about-to-die’ moment, while also speaking into gendered ancestral narratives that permeate our national social imaginary, such as that of idealized motherhood. Rhetorically these photographs participate in collective memory processes by invoking various visual and narrative genres that Americans are largely already familiar with and accustomed to engaging in their sense making of photojournalism. Furthermore, Orlinsky’s (2011a) photographs visually engage gendered narrative framing and discourses of crime and criminality in such a way that facilitates the theorizing of the U.S. as nation. For example, while the re-presented women’s enactment of motherhood is called into question because of their incarceration, alleged crimes, and presentations of self that violate Western norms for femininity, the American audience can simultaneously conceive of the U.S. as a nation in opposition to such enactment of motherhood, while also sympathetic to their (supposed, as narrativized by the photo slideshow) plight. Collectively, the memory processes that are engaged through narrative and visual rhetorical strategies in this slideshow allow for the U.S. as nation to be positioned favorably in terms of its geopolitical relationship while simultaneously being positioned by the same images in opposition to illegal drugs and other fears connected to the Drug War, such as illegal immigration and violence, as will be attended to in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

## MEXICO AS NATION

The U.S. and Mexico have a long history of physical, social, and economic ties (DeChaine, 2012; Shirk, 2011). Director of the Trans-Border Institute at the University of San Diego, Dr. David A. Shirk (2011) states:

On a day-to-day basis, no other country affects the United States as Mexico does. More than ever, Mexico and the United States are deeply interdependent: they are connected by more that \$300 billion in annual cross-border trade, tens of millions of U.S. and Mexican citizens in binational families, and the everyday interactions of more than 14 million people living along the nearly two-thousand-mile shared borders. (p. 5)

Thus the ties between these two countries are personal and public, individual and collective, often deeply politicized, and incredibly nuanced. This geopolitical interconnectivity also means that shifts in the relationship between the United States and Mexico and the multifold boundaries that comprise this relationship can have both material and ideational impacts on the peoples of both nations (DeChaine, 2012).

As explicated in the previous chapter and in order to explore these boundaries both externally and internally, this chapter puts Orlinsky's (2011a) "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" photographs in conversation with larger public discourses, such as those that provide a contemporary geopolitical framework and speak into American cultural obsessions with crime and criminality. By offering a discussion that gazes both internally and externally, this conversation embraces the truly relational nature of that which shapes the boundaries of nation, like our collective memory processes and the narratives that permeate them (see Olick, 2007).



More specifically, this chapter engages the visual rhetoric of Orlinsky's (2011a) photographs and geopolitical discourses about the United States-Mexico relationship to examine external boundaries and disentangle how these photos and their visual narratives rhetorically participate in the American social imaginary and collective memory processes such that they also facilitate the theorizing of Mexico as nation. Given the conceptual parallels between this chapter and the last, it seems only fitting that it unfold in a similar manner. Therefore it will take on the following organizational pattern: first, I survey prominent themes in American international affairs coverage and the geopolitical relationship between the United States and Mexico, especially as re-presented in mainstream American media discourses, such that I attend to the ways in which these media discourses are interwoven with collective memory process and the theorizing of nation through their shared narrative dimensions;<sup>17</sup> secondly, I put these geopolitical discourses (and their accompanying memory processes and theorizing of nation) into conversation with the rhetoric and visual narratives of Orlinsky's (2011a) piece in order to explain what these images communicate about Mexican women and Mexico as nation. While Olick's (2007) framework for process-relational collective memory from chapter three is not reproduced at the beginning of this chapter, it undoubtedly seeps from the previous chapter into this analysis because of its centrality to explicating how Orlinsky's (2011a) images intersect with other Drug War-related discourses and theorizing of nation. Thus once again, Olick's (2007) process-relational collective memory facilitates (and necessitates) the bridging of diverse conversations.

### **Contemporary Media Coverage & The U.S.-Mexico Geopolitical Relationship**

Contemporary media coverage of U.S.-Mexican affairs is only one piece of a much more complex and extensive lineage of mainstream American media coverage of international affairs

(see Nagel, 2003). In order to highlight the ways in which Orlinsky's (2011a) "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" piece rhetorically draws upon gendered conventions found in international affairs coverage while also differentiating itself from the gendered reporting conventions of most Drug War coverage, this section first surveys the gendered themes that emerge across mainstream American media coverage of international affairs and secondly themes that dominant contemporary American coverage of U.S.-Mexico affairs. The conversation I offer in this section therefore establishes a framework for the fields in which Orlinsky's (2011a) photographs and visual narratives circulate, moving from larger fields to more narrow ones, such as the discursive fields specifically found in the *New York Times*. To explain the relationality of these fields and the genres and mediums that saturate them, this conversation also draws upon the profiles that draw these constructs, conversations, and processes together—the U.S.-Mexico geopolitical relationship.

**Mainstream American media coverage of international affairs.** As I addressed when explicating the media's narrative frames that shape the visual rhetoric of Orlinsky's (2011a) "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized," gendered framing is also a dominant force in the mainstream American media's coverage of international affairs (see Nagel, 2003). When considering the gendered framing of international affairs, like that of the Drug War, there are two prominent themes that emerge across mainstream media stories of non-U.S. women (i.e. print newspapers, television, and online mainstream news distributors)—victimization and vilification. While there is no denying the following review of themes is not exhaustive and that gender framing also has material and ideational consequences for men, I attend to these particular themes and representations of women because women's bodies are the ones through which cultural stories of crisis are most often told (Del Zotto, 2002; Jacobs, 2010) and thus these themes are of

tremendous prominence within the mainstream American realm of international affairs media coverage.

The first gendered theme that emerges across mainstream news media coverage of international affairs is that of women as victims. The victimization of non-U.S. women is rhetorically constructed by the media retelling the women's (supposed) narratives in a way that conforms to Westernized ancestral narratives (McKinnon, 2011). For example, in the case of media re-presentations of Afghan women post-September 11th, immense focus was put on the way many of these women cover themselves (Abu-Lughod, 2002). The wearing of the veil was constructed by the mainstream American news media as something oppressive, inflicting great sadness upon the women and exploiting their frailty (Abu-Lughod, 2002). When framed this way, Afghan women are aligned with Western ancestral narratives and accordingly positioned as domestic, obedient, and demonstrating a certain purity, while also victims of the veil and, more importantly, the men who impose the veil upon them because of the way it highlights their supposed vulnerability. In this sense, when non-U.S. women's narratives are framed by the media in a way that allows their characters to conform to norms dictated by Westernized ancestral narratives, they are looked upon as victims because their situation is rhetorically constructed as something beyond their control and imposed upon them by others who are granted agency (see Picart, 2003).

An ancestral narrative that often accompanies that of woman as a victim and that emerges frequently in the reporting of international crises is that of motherhood (see Jacobs, 2010; Malkki, 1996; Parameswaran, 2002). Stories that revolve around women and children, whether composed of images, text, or some multimedia combination, focus attention on women and children's vulnerability while also constructing a story about how the men of their culture have

failed to protect them (Jacobs, 2010). As stated by Jacobs (2010), “A persistent theme of traumatic memory, the evocation of victimized mothers highlights the ineffectuality and assumed cowardice of non-protective fathers” (p. 36). The victimization of women, and particularly mothers, thus places shame and culpability on those who are absent from the re-presentation—men—while ignoring any agency that those in the re-presentation—women—may or may not have (see Del Zotto, 2002; Picart, 2003). Just as in the example of the Afghan women and the veil, narratives of victimization rhetorically draw upon Westernized gendered norms and tropes to position the re-presented non-U.S. women favorably while also stripping them of agentic roles within these narratives.

In lieu of the men in their culture, the construction of women as victims by the American news media is accompanied by the notion that they are in need of being saved by the ‘benevolent West’ (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Cloud, 2004; McKinnon, 2011; see also Bhabha, 1983). Western intervention is constructed as “saving” or “rescue” by a modern culture from a more archaic home (McKinnon, 2011; see also Parameswaran, 2002 for a discussion of the modern versus antiquated binary). As pointed out by Abu-Lughod (2002), “When you save someone, you imply that you are saving her from something. You are also saving her *to* something,” (emphasis Abu-Lughod’s, p. 788). Therefore, by framing non-U.S. women as victims in need of saving, a hierarchy is established in which it is not only implied that their home country is bad, but also that the country doing the “saving” is good and thus superior.

Those women who are deceased as a (supposed) consequence of cultural crises also often are portrayed as victims (Zelizer, 2001). To explicitly visually highlight the urgency of Western projects of “saving,” these women are re-presented as the generally anonymous and indistinguishable masses common in mainstream American photojournalistic coverage (Zelizer,

2001). As stated by Malkki (1996), masses of bodies are “a spectacle of ‘raw’, ‘bare’ humanity. It in no way helps one to realize that each of the persons in the photograph has a name, opinions, relatives, and histories” (p. 387). For example, in her analysis of the media re-presentations of women being liberated from Nazi concentration camps in 1945, Zelizer (2001) describes how group shots of dead women (instead of individual photos) were used to represent victims collectively and highlight the extent of the atrocity. While their death categorizes them as literal victims, it also enthymematically tells the audience that if the West does not intervene, this is the fate that will come to the other victimized women. Additionally, the media re-presentation of “anonymous corporeality” (Feldman, 1994, p. 407; see also Malkki, 1996) places higher value on the graphically exposed bodies of large groups of women than the individual woman. While clearly the mainstream news media cannot devote attention to every individual’s story, by generally devaluing the individual woman in re-presentations of victimization and death, the nuances in individual experiences of crisis are largely lost.

The second major theme that emerges across the re-presentations of women in American news media coverage of international affairs, and particularly crises, is that of vilification. This theme is closely tied to that of victimization, but instead of positioning non-U.S. women in accordance to ancestral narratives, vilifying media re-presentations place them in opposition to these normative cultural stories (McKinnon, 2011). For example, these women are re-presented as “harsh, angled, angry, and often maniacal” (Zelizer, 2001, p. 252). This portrayal thus violates American accepted presentations of femininity by presenting non-U.S. women as threatening to other women and/or to men.

When non-U.S. women are re-presented as villains due to the supposed threat they pose to other women, their media generated character is portrayed as complicit with the atrocity or

crisis that is affecting those around them. Most importantly, the complicity of these women is constructed as a conscious decision (see Zelizer, 2001), highlighting their inherent “badness” and violation of acceptable femininity, which in crisis would require deference to those higher on the gendered social hierarchy—men. These vilified women, or supposed perpetrators, are in many ways positioned in such juxtaposition to ancestral narratives and acceptable norms of self-presentation that they are seemingly stripped of their gender (Zelizer, 2001). For example, in describing the media coverage of female guards and vilified women of the Holocaust, Zelizer (2001) states, “Largely portrayed as monsters who pushed the boundaries of female gendered behavior beyond the category itself, these women were presented without the expected gender markers, perhaps because their barbaric acts so directly challenged those expectations” (p. 264). Non-U.S. women who are vilified in terms of their threat to other women are essentially framed in such opposition to Western gendered norms and narratives that they are portrayed as un-womanlike.

On the other end of the ‘womanlike’ spectrum, the women who are vilified in such a way that portrays them as threatening to men are often hyper-sexualized (Sutton, 1999). These women are re-presented as using their bodies and sexuality for divisive ends, or those that can purportedly corrupt the household (via the seduction of men), divide men, and cause societal instability (McKinnon, 2011, p. 182; Sutton 1999). In the case of these re-presentations, sexuality becomes such a focal point that, as stated by Gronnvoll (2007), “women do not merely *have* sex, they *are* sex” (emphasis Gronnvoll’s, p. 383). This type of hyper-sexualized threat is demonstrated by the 1990s American media coverage of Rody Alvarado’s political asylum case (McKinnon, 2011); despite claims of extreme physical, emotional, and psychological violence, by leaving her husband and domestic life in Guatemala, she was re-presented as visibly opposing

male dominance and thus using her body in an “unnatural,” or threatening, way. Another example of non-U.S. women being positioned by the media as posing a threat to men and the Western household can be seen in the American coverage of the Vietnam War (see Nagel, 2003). Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian women were cast as hyper-sexualized oddities that comprised an exotic and pervasive sex industry (Nagel, 2003). This re-presentation cast these non-U.S. women as a threat to the American household and supposed unity of men in wartime because of their mythic sexuality and consequent ability to seduce American soldiers (see also Owen, Stein, & Vande Berg, 2007).<sup>18</sup> The sexuality of women is therefore commonly framed by the media as dangerous and used as an indicator of one’s vilification.

The victimizing and vilifying gendered frames that non-U.S. women are often interpreted through serve a dichotomizing function— either they are good or bad women, and respectively assimilable or rejected (Sutton, 1999). Assimilable in this sense refers to one’s ability to be incorporated or integrated into another cultural group or society (Nagel, 2003, p. 15). The audience to the news coverage therefore does not merely stand witness to these narratives, but they also participate in supporting or rejecting the stories they consume, which not only contributes to the national social imaginary, but, as mentioned, can have real ethical and social consequences for those whom the stories are about (McKinnon, 2009; Park-Fuller, 2003; Pelias & VanOosting, 1987). As demonstrated in McKinnon’s (2011) analysis of the rhetorical positioning of women’s gender-based political asylum cases in the 1990s, the way women’s narratives and bodies are positioned in reference to this dichotomization can impact how quickly their cases are resolved and ultimately whether or not they are granted asylum.

It is important to note that the narratives of victimization and vilification are not fixed. The dichotomization of women is not a fixed binary because it is heavily influenced by

geopolitical factors, which, although they are often deeply entrenched, are also not fixed. Grewal (2005) offers a useful definition of geopolitics as “a matter of state politics and claims of territories...[and] as a mode of regulation in which discourses of territoriality, space, and nationalism produced forms of subjectivity by differentiating between populations” (p. 17; see also McKinnon, 2011 for a discussion of Grewal’s geopolitics; Ó Tuathail & Agnew, 1992). This means that the way in which a non-U.S. woman (and/or women) is framed by gender is influenced by the location of her place of origin in relation to the U.S. in addition to the political and cultural relationship(s) between the two places. In sum, international affairs coverage generated by the mainstream American news media is a field that is discursively marked by gendered narratives in which non-U.S. women’s bodies are often used to tell cultural stories of crisis (Jacobs, 2010; Nagel, 2003; see also McKinnon, 2011). While these gendered narratives appear to rhetorically facilitate a dichotomization of non-U.S. women, these dichotomizing portrayals are not fixed but instead are fluidly shaped by the ever-changing profiles of geopolitical relationships (McKinnon, 2011).

**Contemporary American coverage of U.S.-Mexico affairs.** In the past few decades, the U.S.-Mexico relationship has largely been discussed in relation to the Drug War (Kellner & Pipitone, 2010; Payan, 2006; Scherlen, 2001, 2008, 2009; Schneck, 2012; Shirk, 2011). The fine contours of a very complex relationship are therefore increasingly smoothed over as one topic, the Drug War, becomes the center upon which much of the relationship appears to pivot. Aside from the physical, economic, social, and political ties between the United States and Mexico that have already been sketched, focus on the Drug War has been particularly fueled in recent years by the Mérida Initiative (Shirk, 2011). Generally speaking, the Mérida Initiative is “a three-year, nearly \$1.4 billion aid package to provide U.S. equipment, training and technical assistance,



counternarcotics intelligence sharing, and rule of law promotion programs in Mexico and Central America” (Shirk, 2011, p. 6; see also Brophy, 2008). While the Mérida Initiative was originally negotiated between the Bush administration and former Mexican president Felipe Calderón, President Obama has continued to support the initiative and subsequent militarization of Mexico (Schneck, 2012). As noted by Schneck (2012), by the beginning of 2011, “U.S. aid to Mexico and Central America aimed at fighting the drug industry totaled \$1.7 billion” (p. 932) and the Obama administration has requested additional funding for future years.

The complexity of the U.S.-Mexico geopolitical relationship, particularly as recently fueled by major transnational efforts like the Mérida Initiative, allows for Drug War discourses to not only span a variety of academic disciplines, such as media studies, sociology, political science, and economics, but to also transverse the bounds between the academic and mainstream popular culture (DeChaine, 2012). Despite this immense diversity, both in terms of who is generating the discourses and what audiences are engaging in the conversation, the border emerges as a prominent theme across the board (see Andreas, 1996; DeChaine, 2012; O’Neil, 2009; Payan, 2006).

Border control is a central component of American discourse about the U.S.-Mexico geopolitical relationship because of the significant amount of anxiety regarding the permeability of the border for illegal immigrants, contraband (particularly drugs and weapons), and violence (Beitell, 2009; Shirk, 2011). As stated by DeChaine (2012), “Prevalent attitudes about the US-Mexico border, border inhabitants, and border crossers have taken shape within a particular conjuncture of predominantly US state-centered political, economic, and socio-cultural discourses, policies, and practices” (p. 7). Media discourses surrounding the relationship between the U.S. and Mexico in particular are largely reflective of these geopolitical concerns (see

Andreas, 1996; Payan, 2006). Put simply, since the U.S.-Mexico border is a central component of the contemporary geopolitical discourse generated by American sources, it is also the focus of much mainstream American news media attention (Andreas, 1996; O'Neil, 2009; Payan, 2006). While the media focus on the border can vary immensely, it often has negative overtones that fail to acknowledge positive dimensions of Mexican political and economic culture, such as the growth of a market-based democracy (O'Neil, 2009). These omissions forward a common mainstream media narrative that "breathlessly proclaims that Mexico is 'on the brink'" (O'Neil, 2009, p. 64; see also DeChaine, 2012).

In addition to Drug War coverage being predominantly negative and concerned with the border, it is also common for border violence to be constructed as rampant and random (O'Neil, 2009). This type of portrayal is counter to arguments forwarded by government and foreign policy scholars that many events along the border and within drug trafficking more generally are the results of shifts in social practices, and thus are by no means purely random (O'Neil, 2009). As Payan (2006) states, "there are actually certain discernible principles that govern illegal-drug-related violence" (p. 868). Disregard for or unawareness of these discernible principles reifies the common Western, alarmist media narrative of Mexico "on the brink" as described by O'Neil (2009).

The *New York Times*' coverage of the Drug War is largely reflective of these geopolitical concerns and Western gendered narratives that permeate international affairs coverage. Drug War coverage about violence, contraband, and illegal immigration predominantly revolves around men and their gender roles assume a background, normative position (see Del Zotto, 2002), but when women's characters are included, the narratives often revolve around the family (e.g. *New York Times*' "A Mexican City's Troubles Reshape Its Families" (Cave, 2011); "In

Prison, Toddlers Serve Time With Mom” (McKinley, 2007); and “Persevering in Ciudad Juárez” (Orlinsky, 2011b)). The family narrative typically focuses on women playing the roles of mothers and wives (Hochschild, 2003). Instead of discussing women as agentic individuals, their characters are predominantly established in relation to the heteronormative family. The photographs of women that accompany these articles or are published as standalone pieces are likely to reflect the family narrative too and are thus dominated by images of women with children and/or grieving (presumably) the loss of loved ones (see “Persevering in Ciudad Juárez” (Orlinsky, 2011b)). For example, Cave’s (2011) article for the *Times*, “A Mexican City’s Troubles Reshape Its Families,” displays a large image of a woman embracing a child, both seemingly unaware that they are being photographed because of the way in which their bodies and faces are not directly engaging the camera. The depiction of women and children is particularly emotive because of its universal symbolism and the attention it generally draws to a sense of vulnerability (Jacobs, 2010; Malkki, 1996; Parameswaran, 2002). There are also people in the photograph who are closer to the camera and crisply in focus, furthering the likely illusion that the woman and the child are unaware of their presence in the photograph. After the photograph, this article begins with the following passage:

Telma Pedro Córdoba could have left this blood- and bullet-marked city when she lost her husband to a drive-by shooting in 2009, or when an injury kept her mother from factory work, or when gunmen killed a neighbor in front of a friend’s 3-year-old son a few months ago. (para. 1)

Each of the reasons for leaving positions Ms. Córdoba’s character in relation to someone else in her narrative—her husband, her mother, and her neighbor—which rhetorically creates a family-esque framework around the woman’s character. The photograph of her embracing her child also solidifies her character within the family as a mother while simultaneously conveying defenselessness because of their apparent subjection to surveillance (through being

photographed) without seemingly knowing. While the photograph initiated the process of narrativizing Ms. Córdoba and her child, just as crime scene photographs do, the news story then supplies the audience with further information on character, scene, and plot, thus advancing the narrative while simultaneously tapping into common gendered conventions for international affairs coverage.

Narrative positioning that places women in less-agentic positions where their relations to other characters are emphasized is also demonstrated in the article “In Mexico, a Kidnapping Ignored as Crime Worsens” (Cave, 2012). This example of gendered narrative positioning explicitly uses the women’s relationships to men to construct their characters and describe their experiences. Instead of the narrative revolving around the kidnapping experiences of a family collectively, the women’s experiences are explicitly connected to a reference about their husbands or boyfriends:

The Cazares women said that they feared a few captors, but that mostly they were treated well. For three nights, teenagers with large weapons told them they would be set free soon, while guarding them in a peach-colored house in a crowded neighborhood. Then, around midnight, three days after they were taken, the kidnappers dropped them off near the loading dock of a nearby Walmart. They were free. But what about their husbands? [...] “We were so in love,” said the wife from the third house that the kidnappers invaded, fighting back tears at the recollection. “He was my first boyfriend.” (para. 29-34)

Once the women are freed, the plot turns to their husbands. It does not ask “What about their children?” or “What about their brothers, cousins, and uncles?” both of which would still position them within the narrative of the family, but not necessarily a heteronormative patriarchal relationship. Thus this example still invokes notions of the women within the framework of the family, but it takes this narrative one step further in that it references a very specific heteronormative family structure and describes the women’s experiences in regards to the disruption of their relationships to their husbands or boyfriends.

Additionally, the plot of these narratives often illustrates a change over time, such as reflection upon the “better” days of the past and then an account of the alleged hardships that currently plague women’s lives. Cave’s (2011) article “A Mexican City’s Troubles Reshape Its Families” produces one such temporally focused narrative in the following passage:

Ms. Pedro, who is 30, met her husband in 1999, at the factory where they both worked. He was a security guard with light skin and broad shoulders. She was cute, calm and quick to giggle. In pictures, he towers over her, holding her close, with a smile as playful as her own. [...] Those memories help keep her here when she thinks of her husband, shot dead in a car with fellow employees on his way home from work, or when she hears the gun battles that frequently punctuate the desert nights. (para. 15-17)

In this story, Ms. Pedro’s picturesque marriage (literally and figuratively according to Cave’s (2011) description) is juxtaposed with the death of her husband and allegedly rampant violence of her surroundings. Temporality can also be seen in the narrative when Cave (2011) described Ms. Pedro’s resolve as stemming from memories of her husband, implicitly conveying her subordination within a gendered hierarchy where even after his death, her husband—the primary male character—remains a source of strength within the narrative. Temporality is therefore relevant to the gendered positioning within Ms. Pedro’s narrative in two ways: first, there is a chronological change from the good times of the past to the unstable and dangerous times of the present, and secondly, there is a slippage across time of memories such that the past (and its gendered narratives) is used to sustain one’s present.

As demonstrated by these excerpts, in the re-presentation of Mexican women who have been affected by the Drug War there is often a narrative expectation for their characters to expose intimate details of their experiences, which can then be implicitly generalized to the experiences of other Drug War affected Mexican women (e.g. the way that their husbands or boyfriends have died; how much they loved them; what memories keep them going). While these narratives are extremely personal, they can be used by the mainstream news media to espouse

overarching narratives of Mexican women's supposed desire for their lost loved ones, need for the safety of family, and lack of rights to certain freedoms and justices that women in the United States supposedly have. While there is no denying that the Drug War has and continues to negatively impact the lives of women, the repeated narratives that position women's characters in relation to others, either in terms of their present experiences and conditions or life changes across time, essentialize the experiences of Mexican women and contribute to larger discourses of nation in which gender is the dominant frame.

These excerpts also tap into the notion that images that are re-presented by the media, the characters, scenes and actions which they are portrayed as a record of, and the mainstream media narratives surrounding them, especially in the case of non-U.S. women's re-presentations, can be important indicators of larger national discourses and narratives of nation, or the fields, genres, and profiles that shape our sociocultural sense making (see Deluca & Peebles, 2002; Demo, 2007; Drechsel, 2010; Finnegan, 2003; Olick, 2007). As argued by DeChaine (2012), "The articulation of political, economic, and social-cultural discourses operating on and around the US-Mexico border bears profoundly on popular understandings and experiences of citizenship and identity in the United States today" (p. 8). More specifically, photojournalistic narratives can reflect and potentially contribute to the construction of foreign policy (Perlmutter, 1998). While it would be a gross oversimplification to state that the news media drives foreign policy or vice versa, for the media and those in the field of foreign policy are comprised of numerous factions that are by no means unified, public discourses often refer to media images to explain policies (Perlmutter, 1998). It is these iconic photographs that stick in our national social imaginary and become fluid pieces of our memory processes.<sup>19</sup>

### **"Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" & Mexico as Nation**

In this section I draw on the geopolitical and gendered media profiles sketched in the last section, “Contemporary Media Coverage & The U.S.-Mexico Geopolitical Relationship,” to argue (and explain how) the photographs of “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” (Orlinsky, 2011a) rhetorically participate in the theorizing of nation via visual and narrative rhetorical strategies that facilitate engagement in collective memory processes. This discussion therefore expands on the arguments of the second chapter, which concerned the ways the re-presented women visually and narratively participate in Western gendered discourses, to also address the visual and narrative rhetorical strategies that the photographs engage in the theorizing of Mexico as nation. More specifically this section unfolds around how Orlinsky’s (2011a) photographs (1) tap into iconic international affairs coverage imagery and (2) are relationally positioned in accordance to geopolitical discourses that are part of the American social imaginary in such a way that rhetorically establishes and negotiates external sociocultural boundaries thereby theorizing Mexico as nation. In sum, the arguments of this section are structured around rhetorical maneuvers as opposed to content in a manner similar to the chapter on the theorizing of the United States as nation.

**Visual rhetorical strategies.** This sub section details the visual rhetorical strategies invoked by Orlinsky’s (2011a) “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” images and explicates how these strategies function within collective memory processes and the theorizing of nation. Put simply, this sub section places Orlinsky’s (2011a) photographs within the aforementioned international affairs media coverage and geopolitical discourses to explore how they function in terms of, first, the gendered dichotomization of non-U.S. women, and secondly, primary border concerns. By situating “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” (Orlinsky, 2011a) within these discourses, I nuance the ways in which the photographic medium that re-presents non-U.S.

women rhetorically operates within photojournalism and other sociocultural fields of sense making while also attending to the ways in which profiles, or political meaning systems (Olick, 2007), inform the relationality of these fields.

First, Orlinsky's (2011a) images visually participate in collective memory processes and thus the theorizing of nation by re-presenting women as both victims and villains, which taps into normative media discourses that portray non-U.S. women in terms of a gendered dichotomization. Since the second chapter of this thesis extensively discussed and nuanced the idea of a visual, gendered dichotomization within Orlinsky's (2011a) photographs, my discussion of this rhetorical strategy here will be brief and focus primarily on connecting this strategy more thoroughly to collective memory processes and the theorizing of nation. As illustrated by the mug shot style images within "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" (Orlinsky, 2011a), there are images that adopt the same general representational conventions but have slight differences in the details, such as mug shot-esque photos with subtle differences in facial expression, that rhetorically construct the re-presented women as either victims, villains, or some paradoxical combination of both. Although Orlinsky's (2011a) images complicate the archetypal dichotomization of non-U.S. women by offering re-presentations that embody both sides of this gendered binary, the photo slideshow also offers viewers photographs that representationally conform to a dichotomization that the audience of mainstream international affairs coverage is all too familiar with. By doing so, other dichotomizing visuals from across time are also evoked and drawn to the forefront of the sense making profiles the audience draws upon to understand the re-presented Mexican women. In this sense, by offering a variety of depictions that on one level hang together compositionally and on another level are highly differentiated from one another, Orlinsky's (2011a) images offer viewers a multitude of photographs (and visual



narratives) that resonate with other images from the American archive of international affairs coverage. This visual resonance thus rhetorically facilitates sense making across fields that also intersect with the aforementioned visual archives.

The second visual rhetorical strategy that invokes collective memory processes and thus the theorizing of nation is the depiction of primary border concerns as manifest in contemporary American geopolitical discourses about the U.S.-Mexico relationship. More specifically, the border concerns regarding illegal immigration, transnational contraband, and violence are particularly evident in the visual rhetorical strategies of Orlinsky's (2011a) images (see Shirk, 2011 for a discussion of these three concerns). This visual rhetorical strategy works by offering a re-presentation of a woman (or women) in El Cereso prison in connection to one of the primary border concerns, thereby giving a face to the problems and fears that mark contemporary geopolitical discourses. For example, in relation to depicting fears concerning contraband, the women's images are marked by convictions for drug trafficking, rhetorically making their images ones that embody the movement of contraband (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 16). In this sense, the re-presented woman is not merely *associated* with drug trafficking, but her re-presentation is that of a drug trafficker. Collectively, any one of the women could be the literal 'face of drugs and drug-trafficking', making each portrait style image in particular able to rhetorically function as a visual synecdoche for contraband (see Finnegan, 2003).

In a similar manner, the threat of violence is rhetorically crafted and marks the women's portraits because they are labeled for crimes like homicide (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slides 5 and 17), weapons trafficking (see slide 10), kidnapping (see slides 4 and 8), and gang affiliation (see slide 15). These labels visually compound the portraits that already appear threatening because of their mug shot-esque composition, intense emotional displays, or facial expressions that seem hostile.

Furthermore, because the violence of the Drug War is typically discussed in terms of men as the agentic, dangerous, and violent characters, the depiction of women as violent is particularly visually disruptive. Some of the re-presented women are not just the wives, girlfriends, and sisters left picking up the pieces after their male counterparts, as evident in the Drug War discourses discussed in the last section, but some of these women embody the violence that American geopolitical discourses reference with much concern (see Shirk, 2011).

Because this visual rhetorical strategy offers re-presentations that are able to transverse the bounds between the intimacy associated with an individual's portrait (see Smith, 1999) and the vagueness associated with images that are used synecdochically, viewers are able to consume the images such that they are not only consuming the "other" in terms of the individual, identified women of El Cereso, but they are also visually consuming some Mexican women as symbols for larger gendered and geopolitical concerns. Collectively this simultaneous conformity to and disruption of familiar Westernized genres of representation within the field of international affairs coverage, leads to Mexican women being rhetorically bound in precarious positions within Orlinsky's (2011a) images—some images forward a victimizing characterization of Mexican women by visually tapping into familiar conventions of international affairs coverage like the depiction of women and children, while others forward a vilifying characterization by re-presenting the women as synecdoches for violence and contraband. Ultimately, by using Mexican women's bodies to re-present the threat of violence or transnational contraband that marks the Drug War and the fears that dominate contemporary American geopolitical discourses, the popular notion of non-U.S. women in crisis as unagentic victims is visually challenged. Interestingly, although the archetype of the unagentic, victimized non-U.S. woman is challenged by some of the "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" (Orlinsky,

2011a) images, these vilified women are still not granted agency within the piece at large because of the competing visual rhetorical strategies, such as those that forward victimizing depictions, and the ways in which the piece as a whole narrativizes these incarcerated women. This narrativization is taken up in the following subsection as the other major rhetorical strategy that facilitates engagement with collective memory processes and theorizing of nation.

**Narrative rhetorical strategies.** As demonstrated by the last chapter, narrative rhetorical strategies are often bound to visual rhetorical strategies when theorizing about collective memory processes through the medium of photojournalism. This subsection therefore builds on the visual rhetorical strategies of the last subsection and addresses the specific narrative rhetorical strategies engaged and evoked by Orlinsky's (2011a) "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized." Put simply, because this text is a piece of photojournalism, these narrative rhetorical strategies often point back to visual dimensions of the photo slideshow. Despite areas of overlap in terms of themes, this subsection addresses how narratives operate within the piece more holistically and how these narratives tap into the larger sociocultural discourses outlined in the last section, such as those of the U.S.-Mexico geopolitical relationship.

First, Orlinsky's (2011a) photographs engage narrative rhetorical strategies by narrativizing women and children "at risk," which taps into commonplace border concerns over illegal immigration (see Shirk, 2011). As explained by Shirk (2011), "the unchecked power and violence of these Mexican DTOs [drug trafficking organizations] present a substantial humanitarian concern and have contributed to forced migration and numerous U.S. asylum requests. If the situation were to worsen, a humanitarian emergency might lead to an unmanageable flow of people into the United States" (p. 5). Put simply, American discourses about the U.S.-Mexico relationship, and specifically the U.S.-Mexico border, are permeated by a

fear of bodies—“othered” bodies in need that could become “an unmanageable flow of people into the United States” (Shirk, 2011, p. 5; Chavez, 2009; see also DeChaine, 2012; Flores, 2003). The ways in which the women re-presented in “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” (Orlinsky, 2011a) are narrativized “at risk” can be seen most explicitly in the statements that accompany many of the photographs:

Mexico’s drug war is more than an armed conflict. With government estimates of its death toll well above 30,000, it is now a *humanitarian crisis* affecting families and shaping the lives of children. (Emphasis mine, slide 1)

The number of women in prison for federal crimes in Mexico has risen by 400 percent since 2007. (slide 3)

The prison population *increasingly* includes young women who were coerced or manipulated into committing crimes [...]. (Emphasis mine, slide 18)

These excerpts construct a story line in which a problem marked by bodies is rapidly getting worse. Because the problem is framed as a humanitarian crisis, its potential transnational consequences are foregrounded; Mexico’s Drug War is not just a Mexican problem, but also a U.S. problem because of the way in which families and children are being affected. In this sense the narratives of Orlinsky’s (2011a) photo slideshow tap into deeply entrenched contemporary American fears about the physical movement of (racialized/othered) bodies across physical borders, and because characters “at risk” are families and children, the United States’ involvement is constructed as even more compulsory.

The second narrative strategy that likewise taps into commonplace border concerns has to do with the construction of the women’s stories around fears of violence and contraband crossing the border. As the last subsection detailed, in addition to the fear of bodies crossing the border, geopolitical narratives about border concerns are also marked by fears of contraband and

violence crossing the border (Shirk, 2011). The following excerpt demonstrates the way in which the women's characters and actions are narrativized in terms of violence and contraband:

Women fending for themselves in a shattered economy, many of them widowed in the violence, are increasingly drawn into criminal activity such as drug trafficking and kidnapping—which some may see as the only options available to support their families. (Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 12)

In this narrative, violence and drug related activity is framed as a growing problem in shaping the lives of the re-presented women. As described in the first narrative rhetorical strategy, the women's characters are again shaped by the relationality to the family, but this narrative also frames violence and drug trafficking as things the women see as “the only options available to support their families” (slide 12). Therefore, violence and contraband are not only narrativized as rampant, but they are also framed as a means to support one's family for which there is sometimes no apparent alternative to.

The last narrative strategy Orlinsky's (2011a) images commonly engage is narrativizing the depicted women in terms of their relationships to men, which invokes commonplace international affairs narratives that contribute to a dichotomization of non-U.S. women. As described earlier in this chapter, when non-U.S. women are narrativized in terms of their relationships to men, they are placed within a gendered hierarchy that rhetorically strips their characters of agency. Instead of their choices and actions being framed as agentic maneuvers they have made of their own volition, the plots of their narratives unfold around the agency of male characters they have relationships with. This hierarchical, gendered narrative framing can be seen in the following excerpt from Orlinsky's (2011a) photo slideshow:

The prison population increasingly includes young *women who were coerced or manipulated* into committing crimes—or *women guilty simply of being with a boyfriend or family member* in the wrong place at the wrong time. (Emphasis mine, slide 18)

In this excerpt the women's incarceration is framed as something they are not responsible for; it is a result of coercion and manipulation (presumably by men) or even just being with someone like a boyfriend. While there have undoubtedly been Mexican women incarcerated for these very reasons largely beyond their control, the narratives forwarded by "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" (Orlinsky, 2011a) do not leave room for alternative narratives that acknowledge the women's own agency within their stories of incarceration. It is narrative excerpts like this one that prevent even the vilified women from being re-presented as agentic characters. As vilified characters they may visually disrupt Western gendered norms, but their narratives are still marked by their relationality to men and the heteronormative family structure.

From an analysis of these photos, it is evident that there are multiple layers of narratives within the piece as a whole. The meta-narrative rhetorically generated by the slideshow is only one of the stories re-presented about Mexico women and thus Mexico as nation. More specifically, the piece at large tells a story about Mexican women, families, and children being increasingly affected by and involved in the allegedly rampant violence and criminality of the Drug War, while three competing sub-narratives exist within the context of this meta-story—(1) Mexican women are victims of circumstances beyond their control, which resonates with the discussion of rights, needs, and desires discussed in the previous chapter; (2) Mexican women are villains for using their bodies in unregulated ways (i.e. being "at risk" and violent, or synecdoches for the threat of illegal immigration, contraband, and violence); and (3) Mexican women are simultaneously victims and villains. Mexico as nation is subsequently precariously positioned as both threatening and potentially in need of Western intervention, while also an ideological ally to the United States. Because the Mexican women's characters are stripped of agency within the visual narratives of Orlinsky's piece (2011a), the vilified women do not

rhetorically construct a depiction of Mexico that the United States must be in opposition to. Alternatively, a favorable U.S.-Mexico geopolitical relationship can be maintained because it is not Mexican women that are narrativized as ‘the problem’, but the drugs and violence that mark the re-presented women’s lives are the root cause of the problem. Based on their enactments of motherhood and other familial roles, the American audience can still make value-laden judgments about the Mexican women’s characters which reify Western gendered hierarchies, but these judgments still allow room for potentiality in the overarching narratives. As demonstrated by the previous chapter, this potentiality is marked by imaginable shifts in rights, needs, and desires (see Haney, 2010). Ultimately, it is this potentiality as rhetorically crafted through visual and narrative strategies that allows Orlinsky’s (2011a) piece to rhetorically participate in a wealth of collective memory processes and thus the theorizing of Mexico as a precariously bound nation.

## CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have offered an analysis of Orlinsky's (2011a) "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" photo slideshow that explores rhetorical intersections between images, narratives, memory, and nation. Orlinsky's (2011a) photographs rhetorically function through both visual and narrative strategies that foreground gender. These strategies span visual rhetorical maneuvers that speak into mainstream American sociocultural discourses, such as gendered ancestral narratives, via the foregrounding of the women's sexuality and depictions of domesticity to compositional mirroring of the archetypal American mug shot. Additionally, these strategies are not only woven together within individual images and across the piece as a whole, but Orlinsky's (2011a) images engage the same strategies in the construction of seemingly polar characterizations and narratives. For example, while the depiction of sexuality can in one image contribute to a victimizing portrayal by rhetorically constructing the re-presented woman as conforming to Western norms for enactment of 'proper' motherhood, references to sexuality in another image can facilitate a hyper-sexualized characterization thereby vilifying the re-presented woman as seemingly out of control (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slides 6 and 9 respectively). Collectively these rhetorical maneuvers forward gendered visual narratives that speak into an all too common dichotomization of women.

By forwarding the aforementioned visual narratives that foreground gender, the images of "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" (Orlinsky, 2011a) participate in collective memory processes



that are also marked by gender. In this sense, collective memory is not a ‘thing’ like an archive or cultural repertoire, but it is processual and marked by said archives in addition to larger discursive genres, political meaning systems, and networks (see Olick, 2007). This process-relational orientation to collective memory has created room within my analysis for greater attention to the contexts in which Orlinsky’s photographs circulate and the variety of fields, genres, and profiles that impact the rhetoric of these image. Orlinsky’s (2011a) photographs are therefore nuanced in relation to American discourses of crime and criminality, such as representations of death and penal system discourses, international affairs media coverage, and the U.S.-Mexico geopolitical relationship. By understanding collective memory to be process-relational and putting it’s genres, profiles, and fields into conversation with the rhetoric of photojournalism’s visual narratives, the relationality of an array of discourses that mark American society can be nuanced by rhetoricians.

The process-relational collective memory that Orlinsky’s (2011a) images engage also illuminates the ways in which these photographs participate in the theorizing of Mexico and the United States as nations. As discussed, the borders of nation are multifold in that they are comprised of racialized, gendered, sexualized, and other ideologically laden distinctions between “us” and “them” (see Chavez, 2009; Flores, 2003; Nagel, 2003; see also DeChaine, 2012). Aside from the boundaries of nation being multifold, this analysis has also demonstrated the ways in which the contours of nation gaze both internally and externally in terms of their sense making. In this sense, the depiction of incarcerated Mexican women not only contributes to the theorizing of Mexico as nation but also the United States as nation. For example, by narrativizing the Mexican women in terms of their enactment of motherhood, the U.S. is constructed in opposition to said enactment (e.g., children being allowed to play on the floor of a prison, see Orlinsky,

2011a, slide 20) thereby maintaining the Westernized norms established by ancestral narratives like that of “True Womanhood” while also maintaining a favorable U.S.-Mexico geopolitical relationship because they can be sympathetic to the re-presented women for being supposed victims of coercion and circumstances beyond their control (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 18). Likewise, because the Mexican women are narrativized in a way that speaks into geopolitical concerns regarding illegal immigration, violence, and contraband, in addition to being precariously bound between victimization and vilification, Mexico as nation is not theorized in opposition to American ideals, but the Mexican Drug War (as something currently shaping Mexico as nation) is positioned as a threat to the United States. Once again this theorizing of nation allows the U.S. to maintain a positive geopolitical relationship while still positioning itself in opposition to gendered characterizations and narratives that oppose Western norms and ideals. In sum, this internal and external theorizing of nation taps into collective memory processes in which a host of discourses and iconic visual narratives circulate, and it engages a gendered framework to negotiate these discourses, the contours of nation, and the re-presented women’s images.

Aside from explicating the ways in which gendered visual narratives can participate in collective memory processes and the theorizing of nation, this analysis also extends rhetorical work on ancestral narratives by devoting close attention to the ways in which a visual medium such as photojournalism complicates the dichotomization of women binary by providing viewers with depictions that are simultaneously both victimizing and vilifying instead of either/or. This analysis therefore explicates a variety of ways in which Orlinsky’s (2011a) images are problematic or participate in problematic collective processes. More specifically, these issues can

be summarized by the follow three interwoven constructs: silencing, the re-presentational double bind, and Western projects for “saving.”

Orlinsky’s (2011a) images demonstrate a silencing function because the re-presented women are visually granted space within a public arena, like that of the *New York Times*, but this space is discursively limiting because of the ways in which it positions and reads the characters and narratives of the re-presented women against Western norms and ideals. Not only do the vast majority of Orlinsky’s (2011a) images literally depict the incarcerated women in silence, but the way in which they are narrativized forwards a Western voice and excludes the voice of the characters that are re-presented. For example, the mug shot-esque photographs that comprise the majority of the photo slideshow are all very silent images (see Orlinsky, 2011a, slides 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, and 17); the women are closed mouth and engaging the camera often in what appears to be isolation. As discussed, when these images and others in the photo slideshow are narrativized, they are captioned and guided by statements not from the perspective of the women but from the perspective of a seemingly distant other. This lack of the women’s voices is illustrated by the way in which the mug shot style images are captioned with statements such as, “Laura Érika Mar, 23, in prison for homicide” (Orlinsky, 2011a, slide, 17) or “Ms. Solorio, in prison for drugs and weapons trafficking” (slide 10). These captions rhetorically silence the women by forwarding a condensed and essentialized characterization to explain their incarceration. There are also no direct quotes or similarly voiced statements regarding the women’s perspective on their incarceration.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the women are silenced because of the ways in which the re-presentations and overarching narratives of this piece strip them of agency within their narratives of supposed criminality. As detailed in chapters two, three, and four, because the women’s characters and criminality are framed as results of their relationships

with men, confusion about rights, needs, and desires, American geopolitical concerns, or even just being in the wrong place at the wrong time, the re-presented women are not granted agentic roles within their own re-presentational narratives. The re-presented women are either too much the victim, too much the villain, or too much of both to garner the media space with which to share their story. The stories that are shared are thus dehistoricized in terms of how the women who have the first hand experience understand their history (see Malkki, 1996), and they are instead in the voice of a seemingly distant (American) other.

Secondly, and closely related to the silencing function, Orlinsky's (2011a) images illustrate the rhetorical construction of a representational double bind that non-U.S. women are placed within in mainstream American news media coverage (see Jamieson, 1995). As detailed by McKinnon (2009, 2011), non-U.S. women are particularly struck by this bind, or the 'paradox of enactment', in that they are framed by gender norms that expect them to overtly display femininity that conforms to American norms while being careful to not display too much emotion so as not to be characterized as out of control, hyper-sexualized, and thus threatening or undesirable. This precarious positioning is not only illustrated by the presence of both victimizing and vilifying portrayals within the slideshow, but it is most pointedly illustrated by rhetorical maneuvers that allow for one image in and of itself to simultaneously embody both poles of this ancestral gendered binary. For example, the image of Nancy Lilia Núñez and her three-year-old daughter is vilifying in terms of Ms. Núñez's hardened appearance but also victimizing because of the way in which she is lovingly placed in relation to her daughter (Orlinsky, 2011a, slide 8). Not only does the paradox of enactment rhetorically facilitate the silencing function by imposing rigid representational norms upon non-U.S. women's bodies, but it can also facilitate the reification and reinscription of these problematic gendered discourses

within our collective memory processes and have material and ideational consequences in terms of how the American audience reproduces, makes sense of, and consumes images of non-U.S. women (Nagel, 2003; see also McKinnon, 2011; Carlson, 2009).

Thirdly, Orlinsky's (2011a) images demonstrate the rhetorical use of non-U.S. women's bodies to forward Western projects of "saving." By orienting the images of "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" (Orlinsky, 2011a) to constructions of nation that maintain a favorable U.S.-Mexico relationship while also upholding Western gendered hierarchies and norms, American political projects that involve Drug War intervention are justified. While as discussed, Orlinsky's (2011a) images do not vilify Mexico (for that would be detrimental to the incredibly important U.S.-Mexico geopolitical relationship), they do implicitly make arguments about Mexican men. For example, slide 11 states, "Women fending for themselves in a shattered economy, many of the widowed in the violence, are increasingly drawn into criminal activity such as drug trafficking and kidnapping—which some may see as the only options available to support their families" (Orlinsky, 2011a). As discussed, statements like this narrativize the women and their criminality in terms of men. Because the narratives generalize the women's supposedly problematic relationships with men beyond the individual incarcerated woman to all re-presented incarcerated women, the gendered problems of the Drug War rhetorically become politicized and not just personal problems (see McKinnon, 2011). Not only is this rhetorical positioning problematic for the ways in which it establishes a hierarchical understanding of the non-U.S. bodies that are re-presented and those intentionally omitted (i.e., Mexican women are precariously bound; Mexican men are universally vilified for their relationality to the re-presented women; and Mexico consequently stands in need of American assistance), but it is also problematic for the hierarchical relationship it rhetorically establishes between the nations it

theorizes. More specifically, these images participate in the (re)construction of racialized notions that forward constructions of the U.S. as an idealized homeland everyone wishes to inhabit and that positions “women from the global South as needy and desiring access to the United States” (McKinnon, 2011, p. 191). This directly taps into contemporary geopolitical fears (see Shirk, 2011), and as stated by McKinnon (2011), “It denies the reality that most people—if given the chance—would prefer to stay in the spaces they know as ‘home’ rather than move elsewhere” (p. 191). Therefore, not only do the rhetorical maneuvers of Orlinsky’s (2011a) images justify American foreign policies and geopolitical actions, but they also engage gender framing to perpetuate stereotypical, racialized, and fear driven discourses that position the U.S. in a material and ideologically superior position to Mexico.

Ultimately, the ways that American media consumers and producers currently engage the bodies of non-U.S. women to construct visual narratives is not just problematic because of its silencing function and the good/bad binaries that are forced upon those re-presented, but it is more significantly problematic because of the way in which these racialized, gendered, and socially stereotyped narratives participate in collective memory processes and the shaping of discourses of nation. As pointed out by Bhabha (1983) in his work on stereotypes and colonial discourse, it is not important that we as scholars understand whether these discourses are positive or negative, but that we gain “an understanding of the *process of subjectification* made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse” (emphasis Bhabha’s, p.18). Merely pointing out the negative and positive portrayals of non-U.S. women does not unpack the rhetorical processes of subjectification these women are positioned within. Furthermore, it is important to also ask what these re-presentations signify about other categorizations/characters and cultural narratives that are being attached to them, such as those of our understandings of crime, punishment and

imprisonment through a gendered lens; as Carlson (2009) argues, “we can find out how a culture views a woman by examining the symbolic structures that attach themselves to her” (p. 19). Put simply, it is through continued engagement with a process-relational understanding of collective memory that rhetoricians can understand how gendered discourses, and particularly those pertaining to non-U.S. women, function as pieces of other sociocultural happenings. As long as the archetypal and ancestral narratives that facilitate portrayals of women as victims, villains, or some paradoxical hybrid continue to dominate media stories of non-U.S. women, the othering and marginalization of their bodies and identities via gendered memory processes, constructions of nation and enforcement of legal, cultural, political, and sexual boundaries between “us” and “them” will also continue (see DeChaine, 2012; Nagel, 2003).

Further research that explores the intersections between photojournalism (and thus images and narratives), collective memory processes, and the theorizing of nation is therefore critical for two primary reasons: first, because of the ways in which these intersections can still be greatly nuanced through attention to other fields, genres, and profiles from a process-relational perspective; and secondly, because of the way in which photojournalistic images are proliferating as a part of contemporary society’s mediated nature. Put simply, technological advances have allowed for our world to be permeated by photographs from both around the world and across time. As explained by Zelizer (2004), “Modern culture’s capacity to freeze, replay, and store visual memories for large numbers of people—facilitated by museums, art galleries, television archives, and other visual data banks—has enhanced our ability to make the past work for present aims” (p. 161). Rhetoric scholars possess the necessary tools to begin disentangling these sociocultural nexuses and thus should continue advancing our understanding not only that these intersections exist and are largely problematic for their reification of

gendered, racialized, and sexualized hierarchies, but of *how* the visual, narrative, memory, and nation come together to materially and ideationally shape our cultural borders and boundaries.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Photographer Katie Orlinsky, a New York City based photographer whose photographs largely concern international politics and humanitarian issues and has worked for major publications such as the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* (see Hida, 2012), took all of the photographs that comprise this piece of photojournalism. Orlinsky's (2011a) "Mexico's Drug War, Feminized" piece first appeared in the *New York Times* in the late summer of 2011 as a multimedia feature along with a related article under the same title. Both the photo slideshow and the article are aligned with the aforementioned online section of the *Times*' archive entitled "Mexican Drug Trafficking (Mexico's Drug War)" (*New York Times*, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Del Zotto (2002) offers an analysis of a similarly gendered media portrayal. More specifically Del Zotto (2002) engages a media content analysis to argue, "The media, in their relentless pursuit of speech and simplicity, tend to reduce the complexity of war to a set of maneuvers, order, and declarations made solely by state actors [read men]. In this way, women's voices are rarely heard in the media's coverage of war" (p. 142).

<sup>3</sup> Barthes (1977b) explicitly makes the argument that images, and thus photographs, are multivocal and states, "all images are polysemous" (as quoted in Handa's (2004) *Visual Rhetoric in a Digital World*, p. 156). For foundational readings on the ability of the visual to make arguments see Birdsell and Groarke (1996), Blair (1996), Shelly (1996). Fleming (1996) offers an interesting rebuttal to the arguments made by the aforementioned authors in the summer 1996 issue of *Argumentation and Advocacy*.

<sup>4</sup> Lamp's (2011) "'A City of Brick': Visual Rhetoric in Roman Rhetorical Theory and Practice" offers a discussion of memory in regards to "the relationship between rhetoric and the visual in Roman rhetorical treatises as they relate to the Augustan cultural campaigns, particularly the Augustan building program that transformed the city of Rome to a 'city of marble'" (p. 174). The 'culture of memory' that Lamp (2011) discusses therefore diverges from the 'culture of memory' I am addressing in this chapter, but offers an interesting way of conceptualizing this phrase in terms of the visual in the context of the city's appearance and memory as a canon of traditional rhetorical theory.

<sup>5</sup> Assmann and Czaplicka (1995) make the argument that no artifacts can truly be preserved in a strict sense of the term 'preserve': "No memory can preserve the past. What remains is only that 'which society in each era can reconstruct within its contemporary frame of reference'" (p. 130).

<sup>6</sup> As with any ontological divide within the field of communication, there are scholars that do not fall neatly within one camp or another. For example, in terms of narrative as a universal paradigm of communication (i.e. Fisher) versus narrative as just one form of communication (i.e. Rowland), Lucaites and Condit (1985) do not deny the potential for a "universal narrative metacode" (p.105), but argue that if it does exist, it has yet to be discovered. Therefore, while reviewing some of these major ontological differences it is helpful to conceive of them as divides for purposes of organization and simplification, I want to acknowledge that in fact many of these issues can be thought of more as fluid spectrums.

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<sup>7</sup> Despite the assumed truth value of these media depictions, and especially those that are photojournalistic (Finnegan, 2003; Sontag, 1977; Zelizer, 2001), I will often refer to *re-presentations* as opposed to representations to highlight the way in which the media images and narratives are highly subjective, ideologically filtered, and carefully crafted entities that do not necessarily bear any likeness to the reality which they claim to refer back to.

<sup>8</sup> Crenshaw's (1991) "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color" furthers the discussion of how gendered and racialized inequalities can impact survival for women who are "othered" by providing an interesting discussion of American domestic violence support services. Picart (2003) also offers a rhetorical analysis that engages rhetoric of law and builds on some of the racialized dichotomizations addressed by Crenshaw.

<sup>9</sup> Orlinsky's (2011a) images are reproduced throughout the remainder of the thesis to aid the reader. Larger, higher resolution copies of the reproduced images can be found on the *New York Times*' website. The URL for this link can also be found in the references under Orlinsky (2011a).

<sup>10</sup> In this discussion, by 'textually' I mean in a written sense.

<sup>11</sup> While not an analysis of non-U.S. women, Finnegan's (2003) *Picturing Poverty* does tackle similar rhetorical maneuvers and implications in regards to Depression Era photography, such as that of the iconic image "Migrant Mother."

<sup>12</sup> Olick (2007) is drawing on Bourdieu's (1996) *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* in this conversation.

<sup>13</sup> In Olick's (2007) illustration of German reparation payments, he also points to the fields of politics and public opinion to highlight the ways in which "different fields operate by different rules with different results for memory" (p. 96).

<sup>14</sup> See examples of such images in Smith (1999) pages 72-91.

<sup>15</sup> For analyses of archetypal famine aid imagery see Clark's (2004) "The Production of a Contemporary Famine Image: The Image Economy, Indigenous Photographers and the Case of Mekanik Philipos;" Malkki's (1996) "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization;" and Moeller's (1999) *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death* (particularly pp. 33-53).

<sup>16</sup> The U.S. currently has around 7 million adults under the supervision of the correctional system, around 1.6 million of whom are incarcerated (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011). "Under the supervision of the correctional system" includes adults (those over the age of 18) who are incarcerated in jails (generally run by local law agencies), state and federal prisons, or in parole and probation programs. Those under the age of 18 who were prosecuted as adults are legally considered adults and thus included in this data. Given the size of its imprisoned population, the

U.S. is one of the leading countries in imprisonment in the world, with more people incarcerated (proportional to the population) than Russia and China at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Haney, 2010). Women make up the fastest growing segment of the incarcerated population, having risen 650% since 1980 (Haney, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> I adopt the standpoint, as taken by other visual rhetoric scholars such as Finnegan (see Finnegan, 2000, 2003, 2008; see also Barnes, 2006; Jack, 2009; Kimble & Olson, 2006) that contextual information is critical to rhetorical criticism. For this reason, discussion of the geopolitical climate in which the photographs of “Mexico’s Drug War, Feminized” (Orlinsky, 2011a) circulate is central to understanding the ways in which visual gendered discourses and theorizing of nation are articulated within our national social imaginary and through processes of collective memory (see Finnegan, 2003, 2008). As stated by Finnegan (2008), “vision and visual practices are historically situated. This [...] has important methodological implications for the rhetorical critic” (p. 98). For a discussion that largely refutes the centrality of such contextual information, see DeLuca’s (2006) “The Speed of Immanent Images: The Dangers of Reading Photographs.”

<sup>18</sup> Owen, Stein, and Vande Berg (2007) provide an interesting analysis of pop culture narratives, particularly cinematic ones, which emerged post-Vietnam in response to fears of “the destabilization of masculinity” and “moral atrocity” (p. 22).

<sup>19</sup> ‘Iconic’ in this sentence is not used to refer to the same narrowly defined iconicity as explored by Hariman and Lucaites (2002, 2007), such as that of the *Flag Raising at Iwo Jima* or *Migrant Mother*, but is instead used to merely highlight the way in which such condensed images are memorable and recurrent across time. Hariman and Lucaites’ (2007) *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* offers a theoretically nuanced discussion of the term iconic in relation to images (particularly pp. 5-6).

<sup>20</sup> An example of such silencing can be seen in the news media coverage of refugees from Burundi in the early 1990s. Malkki (1996) describes the *Los Angeles Times*’ coverage of these refugees that engages a picture of women and children to represent “generic refugees and generic Africans” (p. 389); these refugees are not granted the news space to tell their stories, but their bodies are used to illustrate narratives from Western voices like “refugee experts” and “relief officials” (p. 390). This resulted in Burundi women who were displaced for a variety of reasons being essentialized, grouped together under sweeping narratives, and collectively silenced, thus severely impacting their already constrained agency.

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