

Performing Civic Identity: The Iconic Photograph of the Flag Raising on Iwo Jima

Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites

Iconic photographs are widely recognized as representations of significant historical events, activate strong emotional response, and are reproduced across a range of media, genres, or topics. The appeal of the iconic image of a group of Marines raising the U.S. flag on Iwo Jima arises from its embodiment of three discourses of political identity—egalitarianism, nationalism, and civic republicanism. Its appropriations reflect a range of public attitudes—civic piety, irony, nostalgia, and cynicism. The role of visual icons in constructing civic attitudes to mediate historical events was underscored by the use of the flag-raising image following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Key words: icons, identity, performance, political emotion, visual rhetoric, public sphere, ideology

THERE is arguably no image that resonates more with the popular understanding of the U.S. role in World War II than the photograph of five Marines and a Navy hospital corpsman raising the Stars and Stripes atop Iwo Jima's Mt. Suribachi on February 23, 1945. The photograph, taken by AP photographer Joe Rosenthal, appeared prominently two days later on the front page of Sunday newspapers across the country; shortly thereafter it was reproduced in virtually every local newspaper and weekly news magazine.¹ The first news editor in Guam to see the photograph remarked, "Here's one for all time!"² The *New York Times* quoted an editor who dubbed it "the most beautiful [picture] of the war."³ The following week *Time* magazine reported, "Henceforth, Iwo would be a place name in U.S. history to rank with Valley Forge, Gettysburg, and Tarawa. Few in this generation would ever forget . . . the sculptured picture of Old Glory rising atop Mt. Suribachi."⁴

Public reception was immediate and resounding. Newspapers were inundated with requests for reprints as families began to hang it on their living room and dining room walls. The *Times-Union* of Rochester, New York, compared it with Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*.⁵ On March 12th the *New York Times* published a letter dated February 28th that proclaimed, "On the front page of the *Times* of Feb. 25 is a picture which should make a magnificent war memorial. . . . Reproduced in bronze, this actual scene should make good art and a fitting tribute to American men and American valor."⁶ The point was not lost in Washington, D.C., as several members of Congress quickly urged passage of a bill that would fund the building of a monument based on the image. The permanent monument was not unveiled until 1954, but by mid-March Congress had appropriated the Rosenthal image as the symbol for the Seventh War Loan Drive; at the same time the photograph became the subject of a public campaign to have the U. S. Post Office issue a special "Iwo Jima" stamp. More than 3,500,000 posters bearing an artist's rendition of the photograph were produced for the bond drive, as well as nearly 15,000 large billboards and over 175,000 cards to be placed on the sides of streetcars and buses; the postage stamp sold over three million copies on the first day and 137 million copies before going out of print in 1948.⁷ The original photograph was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, the only time the award was given by acclamation in the same year the prize photo was taken.⁸

Photographs from the war were numerous, of course, but none evoked such an immediate, positive reaction, and only a few have come close to withstanding the test of

time. By most accounts the photographic print has been reproduced more than any other photograph—ever—and the image itself has been placed on inspirational posters, commemorative plates, silk screens, gold etchings, woodcuttings, key chains, cigarette lighters, matchbook covers, beer steins, hats, t-shirts, calendars, comic books, cacheted envelopes, trading cards, postcards and more.⁹ Recently, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Second World War, it has been featured as *the* symbol of the war throughout the mass media on countless books and videos and on numerous websites.¹⁰ References to it have become a common trope of public argument while it continues to be featured in popular appeals to patriotism and as a vehicle for ironic commentary in editorial cartoons.¹¹

As a distinctive and enduring image in the public media, the image of the flag raising on Iwo Jima presents a special opportunity to explore the role of visual imagery in the formation of public culture. To that end, this essay seeks to account for its rhetorical power: why has it achieved such distinctive status in public discourse and collective memory? Instead of supplying a single answer, our analysis follows an interpretive logic we believe is best suited to understanding visual eloquence. The iconic photo enacts the constitutive function of public discourse and coordinates multiple transcriptions of the historical event to manage fundamental contradictions in public life. This rich articulation of civic action in the Iwo Jima photograph provides performative resolution of the tension between liberalism and democracy in U.S. post-war public culture. The varied appropriations of the image across successive generations demonstrate how liberal-democratic public life is continually redefined in respect to an array of attitudes ranging from civic piety to cynicism.

Civic Identity and Iconic Photography

Like the art of rhetoric generally, visual media have been thought to be either irrelevant or dangerous with respect to democratic deliberation and the public use of reason. Although part of a pervasive logocentrism in the Western academy, such objections also reflect assumptions about intentionality and influence that recently have been displaced by theoretical claims about the constitutive function of public discourse.¹² As Michael Warner summarizes, “publics do not exist apart from the discourse that addresses them.”¹³ The norms, interests, political effectivity, self-awareness, and substantive claims characterizing public culture are defined by the composition and circulation of texts (including words and images) through mass media or similar practices of dissemination. Because such media continually interpellate audiences and typically model preferred forms of response, their diverse contents of words and images, announcements and advertisements, news and entertainment can structure consciousness in ways that are not reducible to determinations of influence on specific policy decisions.

This broader structuring of consciousness has made constitutive theory a natural ally of ideological critique. As Warner indicates, however, “What the critiques tend to miss . . . is that the tension inherent in the form” of public address “goes well beyond any strategy of domination.”¹⁴ The significant entailment is that the ideological implications of specific texts or images are necessary but not sufficient for understanding how public address fulfills such interrelated functions as constructing public identity, modeling relationships between the individual and the collectivity, and motivating action or quiescence. Because the public is a body of strangers constituted solely by the acts of

being addressed and paying attention, it can only acquire self-awareness and historical agency if individual auditors "see themselves" in the collective representations that are the materials of public culture. Visual practices in the public media play an important role at precisely this point. The widely disseminated visual image provides the public audience with a sense of shared experience that anchors the necessarily impersonal character of public discourse in the motivational ground of social life.

The daily stream of images in the public media, although merely supplemental to reporting the news, define the public through an act of common spectatorship. All viewers *seem* to see the same thing. When the event shown is itself a part of national life, the public seems to see itself, and to see itself in terms of a particular conception of civic identity. At this point, the visual image is a direct and specific social inflection of the impersonal schema of public concepts. As Warner notes, "It is hard to imagine such abstract modes of being as rights-bearing personhood, species being, and sexuality, for example, without forms that give concrete shape to the interactivity of those who have no idea with whom they interact."¹⁵ Of course, this is precisely why there is a fundamental contradiction in public identity. Concepts such as citizenship, emotions such as love of country, acts such as public advocacy, and practices such as critical reflection can only be taken up by others if they also provide some basis for identification, some grounding in the positive content of lived experience.¹⁶ The abstract forms of civic life have to be filled in with vernacular signs of social membership. At that point, supposedly universal concepts immediately become self-limiting, exclusionary, and rightly subject to ideological critique.

What remains to be understood, however, is how ideological articulation operates as part of an unavoidable kink in the constitution of public culture. If specific embodiment becomes completely dominant (e.g., the white male property owner), the public ceases to exist, having been displaced by a specific social group. If the impersonal and rationalized forms and categories of public discourse (e.g., news for citizens) predominate, then the public also ceases to exist, having little motivational basis for uptake and action. To take a specific example, the Iwo Jima icon is celebrated for its egalitarian ethos, yet it also appears to be a picture of white men.¹⁷ The picture could imply that only such men were qualified for citizenship or contributing to the war effort, although that would hardly fit with its use by the government to maintain public support for the war. The rhetorical problem is that affirmation of the principle of equality is necessary for social cohesion in a democratic society, but that principle has no motivational power without social embodiment, which always will be limited to some and exclude others. This dilemma persists in subsequent appropriations of the image that have substituted women and people of color for the soldiers. Thus, both the legitimacy and the power of the public sphere are at stake in any specific articulation of public address, although some forms of public address may prove better suited than others to negotiate this contradiction in modern representation. One could expect, moreover, that such forms would be perceived as both more likely to provide context than argument, and to be means of ideological manipulation rather than rational deliberation. So it is with visual images, particularly those in close daily association with the preeminent mode of public representation: the news coverage of print journalism.

The images of photojournalism are at once essentially impersonal texts circulating among strangers and a performative embodiment of the social content essential for attentive uptake of public discourse. Some images, such as the Iwo Jima photograph, acquire unusually high degrees of public response amid continued circulation. These

striking images succeed not from any unconventionality in their content or composition, but rather from an exceptional ability to constitute and negotiate public consciousness. By filling in the impersonal form of that consciousness with corresponding signs of social experience, they provide an affective anchor for political ideas. Through their circulation, they provide a basis for the reproduction of and critical reflection on public culture. Through their aesthetic appeal and plasticity, they provide the public audience with an emotionally complex, performative resolution of basic contradictions. By examining iconic photographs as a genre of public address, one can reassess the role of visual practices in the public media and discern specific problems, anxieties, and attitudes that define public culture in particular historical moments.

We define iconic photographs as photographic images produced in print, electronic, or digital media that are widely recognized, are understood to be representations of historically significant events, activate strong emotional response, and are reproduced across a range of media, genres, or topics.¹⁸ Examples include the migrant mother staring past the camera while three children cling to her amid the Great Depression, John-John saluting his deceased father's passing caisson, the Vietnamese girl running in terror from a napalm attack, and the lone protestor staring down a tank near Tiananmen Square.

Iconic photographs perform several important functions in public address. They reflect social knowledge and dominant ideologies; they shape understanding of specific events and periods; they influence political action by modeling relationships between civic actors; and they provide figural resources for subsequent communicative action. As they do so, they also illustrate the ways that visual communication can underwrite polity by providing resources for thought and feeling that are necessary for constituting people as citizens and motivating identification with and participation in specific forms of collective life. They accomplish this either through the embodiment of symbolic resources that are available throughout the print media or by emphasizing what cannot be said well or at all in print. In any case, the visual medium is particularly good at activating aesthetic norms that can shape audience acceptance of political beliefs and historical narratives.

To advance these arguments, it is necessary to examine specific photographs according to a set of critical assumptions that draw upon their position and frequent reproduction in public media as civic performances. Performances are aesthetically marked, situated, reflexive examples of restored behavior presented to an audience.¹⁹ Like a "primitive theater," photography is grounded in phenomenological devices crucial to creating the performative experience.²⁰ Framing, for example, whether by the proscenium arch or by the rectangular boundaries of any photograph, marks the work as a special selection of reality that acquires greater intensity than the flow of experience before and after it. As they are framed, photos become marked as special acts of display. This aesthetic status heightens awareness of the stylistic features of any subject as it carries expectations for "communicative competence" in both the production and reception of the work. These expectations emphasize how the photograph is situated and that it is reflexive: it is always of a specific place and time, although it occupies highly programmatic settings in the public media (e.g., front page above the fold, flags and fireworks on the Fourth of July). These settings allow a second-order, reflexive consciousness that comes from foregrounding social actors, from signifying practices such as gesture and fashion, and from the communicative role of the photograph itself.

Equally important is that performative engagements inevitably are emotional. Performances traffic in bodies, and they call forth emotional responses precisely because they place the expressive body in a public space. David Hume observed that we feel more through the public exposure to others' emotions than through an interior circuit of sensations, and contemporary scholarship on the social construction of the emotions provides strong confirmation.²¹ The photograph's focus on bodily expression not only displays emotions but also places the viewer in an affective relationship with the people in the picture. These emotional signs and responses operate reliably and powerfully because they are already presented within the society's conventions of display, as anyone recognizes when viewing theater from another culture. Thus, photography operates not just as a record of things seen, but as a way of seeing that is attentive to what is aesthetically distinctive, socially characteristic, and emotionally evocative.²²

Within the performative space created by the iconic photograph a series of transcriptions occur.²³ One reason images become iconic is that they coordinate a number of different patterns of identification within the social life of the audience, each of which would suffice to direct audience response, but which together provide a public audience with sufficient means to comprehend potentially unmanageable events. Because the camera records the décor of everyday life, the photographic image becomes capable of directing the attention across a field of gestures, interaction rituals, social types, political styles, artistic genres, cultural norms, ideographs, and other signs as they intersect in any event. Thus, the icon does not so much record an event or fix a particular meaning as it organizes a field of interpretations. This coordination of discursive fields through performative embodiment is the reason that the iconic photograph need have little relationship to the conventional journalistic function of reporting information.

The more important task of the iconic image is to manage a basic contradiction or recurrent crisis within the political community. The foundational tension between the universal forms of public discourse and their socially determined content becomes a rhetorical space within which historically specific conflicts can be managed performatively. One of the dilemmas at the heart of liberal-democratic polity is how to negotiate the trade-off between individual autonomy and collective action. These separate though linked principles are central to the political system and are grounded in its foundational documents, asserting, for example, that the government is instituted to secure (not grant) the individual's "unalienable rights," and declaring that "We, the people" (collectively) constitute the sole authority for governing. Commonly, this tension is experienced as a murky gray area of guilt and freedom between self-interest and the common good. This tension comes to a head in the definition of citizenship.²⁴ Liberal-democratic citizenship is of necessity ambiguously defined, loosely enforced, relatively abstract and, therefore, a questionable basis for collective action. If citizenship is to be an actual mode of participation rather than a merely legal construct or regulative ideal for decision making, then it has to be articulated in a manner that encourages emotional identification with other civic actors. Indeed, in the modern era, which is defined in part by large, heterogeneous states maintained through technologies of mass communication, citizenship may depend on visual modalities that can enact the relationship of the abstract individual to the impersonal state. Likewise, the modern nation-state requires transference of passionate identification with local, embodied, organic institutions to a superordinate, procedural governmentality, and this shift in identification is accomplished in part through images of virtual embodiment that simultaneously reframe locality within

a national context while grounding national symbols in the social experience of everyday life.

One result is that public audiences acquire an appetite for models of how to be "good citizens." The public media are more than happy to supply them. The typical Fourth of July picture of the child eating her ice cream cone in front of a U.S. flag is just such an image, as is the image of three firefighters looking up at the flag they have raised at ground zero in New York City. In its journalistic form, the photographic image represents and validates the complex identification vital to an embodied citizenship. In every case, however, that embodiment will recapitulate the tensions between the universal inclusiveness of public address and the specific embodiment of public identity, and it will have to be positioned with regard to personal autonomy and collective affiliation. We believe that photographic images become iconic when they provide artistically powerful resolutions of these endemic tensions in modern, liberal-democratic public culture. Accordingly, an icon can continue to shape public understanding and action long after the event has passed or the crisis has been resolved pragmatically. Put differently, the iconic photograph provides the audience with "equipment for living" as a vital public culture.²³

At its best, the Iwo Jima photograph may appear to be a cliché for U.S. exceptionalism and an idealized conception of national life that sanctions unreflective respect for institutions (especially militarism), a passion for conformity, and other excessively majoritarian attitudes; at its worst, it would seem to be a celebration of "manifest destiny" and the Cold War notion of the United States as "policeman of the world," while it reinforces the continued exclusion of women and other marginalized groups. We have no doubt that features of the photograph are linked to these larger ideological narratives, or that some viewers, not least those who have given the image totemic status in their personal life, use it to reinforce such a world view. That much is easy to identify today; however, there is another story to tell. The composition itself, its initial reception, its varied appropriations, and its continuing circulation in the public media reveal a complex process in which democratic citizenship is continually renegotiated through artistic variation on what has become a conventional model of civic identity.

Transcriptions of Civic Piety

They are on a high barren place (Figure 1). No trees, only the twenty-foot pole. No other mountains, only a blank visual field of featureless lowlands and overcast sky. The immediate foreground is a low tangle of shattered wood, rock, and metal debris, the underbrush of war's devastation. The photograph's blasted, empty terrain allows the figural composition to project powerfully into the mind's eye. It also presents an idealized model of the modern battlefield. The island is as featureless as the sea, while the marines are the only soldiers left on the field, struggling against natural forces, not against other men. There are no civilians, no houses or other buildings, not even enemy fortifications; no society is evident except for the one being erected. This barren stage cues the photograph's conjunction of aesthetic design and political representation. War provides the backdrop for a moment of national celebration, and the battlefield becomes a world to be made in our image.

The soldiers fit perfectly into the scene. They may be the ideal work group: the leader directing the task while laboring no less than the others; those directly behind him in perfect concert with him, attentive and disciplined; those in the rear, whose physical

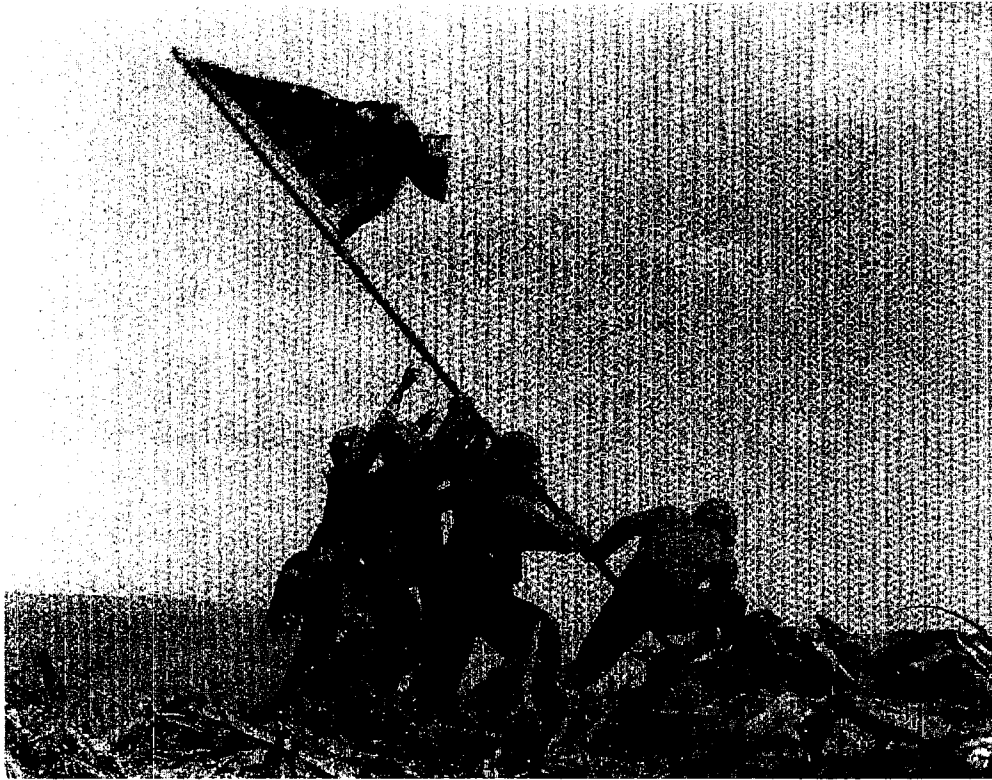


FIGURE 1
(Reprinted with the permission of AP/World Wide Photos)

effort is no longer necessary, still straining to add any last effort that might be needed. The visual analogies evoked by the image are to similar forms of manual labor: a community barn raising or putting one's shoulder to the wheel.²⁶ There is a palpable harmony to the bodies as they strain together in the athleticism of physical work. Although the poses shift from being bent close to the ground to bearing a load to lifting upwards, one can draw a horizontal line across their belt lines, their knees all move together as if marching in step, all their physical energy flows along their common line of sight to the single point of impact in the earth.²⁷ The figure planting the pole could be a Renaissance sculpture as the dynamic energies of the human form are concentrated in the exquisite muscularity of his back. He also concentrates the energies of those poised behind him as their forward movement is channeled down the pole and through his legs, back, and arms into the earth. We see the sure coordination of bodies with each other and with an instrument dedicated to their task.²⁸

This coordination of the figures in the picture mimes the icon's coordination of interpretive motifs. An image from a horrific battle shows war as labor rather than killing; the only weapons are hardly visible, not in use, and aligned neatly in the vertical plane of the picture. The labor is on behalf of a flag, of nation building, not the destruction of other cultures, although the image remains a symbol of military victory culminating in the enemy's unconditional surrender. As is the case for each dimension

of the photograph, it can be read *both* as a symbol of conventional ideas of conquest and cultural superiority *and* as a more flexible model of citizen action that extends beyond the topical field of war precisely because it already embodies widely available structures of motivation. These patterns of political representation include egalitarianism, nationalism, and civic republicanism. These are not the only motifs at work in the image, but they are crucial principles of design and appeal. Because of their joint articulation, each has a slightly different inflection than might be expected. By identifying each briefly in turn, one can begin to account for the icon's compositional richness, a richness that proves to be an inventional resource for a wide range of appropriations.

Egalitarianism

As Paul Fussell notes, "The photograph is not about facial expressions but about body expressions, suggesting, in a way bourgeois faces can never do, powerful and simple communal purpose."²⁹ Fussell's observation captures a conventional relationship between depictions of the working class, the acceptance of anonymity, and political community. Hal Buell sees the same thing: "six Americans, all for one, working together in victory and valor."³⁰ In other words, the photograph depicts the U.S. war effort as essentially egalitarian. The soldiers are wearing identical uniforms, in field dress, with no brass or other indication of rank. They become ordinary men in common labor for a common goal. The pants and field jackets cling to the men's bodies from long use, and the dark tones suggest the sweat of honest labor. Thus, the composition also has the affective resonance of genre painting. The men in the picture are immersed in the deep rhythms and resonant emotions of their labor while bathed in a sublime aura they can barely recognize. The full implication of this portrait of the working class is that they are equal to the task *because* equal alongside each other, just as they are prepared to labor on for the military without regard for their personal safety until all are equal in death. This visual icon of the idea of political equality fuses the lesser sacrifice required in any egalitarian society—setting aside received rank, privilege, or other advantages for the common good—with the ultimate sacrifice of giving one's life for the nation or for one's comrades. Thus, the photo appeals directly to a foundational national value, while it also refigures that value by presenting military action as the purest form of its expression. That the military is a hierarchical organization is irrelevant, an awareness displaced by other hierarchies in the picture: the subordination of the men to the flag rising above them, and their superior position to the invisible Japanese positioned below.

This strong egalitarian appeal has to be contained in order to articulate consensus. Any egalitarian appeal soon draws attention to actual conditions in the society; while calling for common effort, it also implicitly condemns any denial of equality. Frustrations experienced by workers, women, and people of color were in fact barely contained by the war or were being fueled by the economic mobilization, tension already strong enough to require management across the spectrum of commercial and government propaganda.³¹ The ideological dilemma was that strong images of egalitarian effort were needed to mobilize the home front, but these carried unsettling implications about established social organization. The flag-raising photograph seems to have neutralized any radically egalitarian implications, which may stem from its depictions of the dominant social group and of military service, as well as its idealized embodiment of working class routine. We believe the stronger constraint comes from placing the

egalitarian appeal within two larger patterns of motivation: the symbolic structure of nationalism and a civic republican political style.

Nationalism

As one of the men in the picture remarked much later, "You think of that pipe. If it was being put in the ground for any other reasons. . . . Just because there was a flag on it, that made the difference."³² All the actions of the campaign, from strategic planning to the awful work of hand-to-hand combat, are folded into the symbol of national unity. The men's channeling of their private identities and energies into a common task is amplified, the whole composition a visual metonym that links the material embodiment of labor and abstract national identity. The image itself becomes a standard: egalitarian labor should serve the nation, which needs only egalitarian labor to thrive. Rarely has a photo arrived so perfectly tailored for subsequent use by the state. Witness the poster for the seventh war bond drive, which captioned an illustration of the image with the words, "Now. . . All Together." The public is hailed as fellow soldiers, united in their sacrifices for and defense of the nation, and called to increase their efforts toward total victory.

The flag's significance in the photo goes beyond any one interpellation of citizenship, however. Through its presence, it activates nationalism as a powerful mode of definition and identification; through its position within the composition, it gives nationalism a particular inflection uniquely suited to iconic appeal. This positioning comes, first, from the relationship between the abstract symbol of citizenship and the figural representation of anonymous, citizen action, and second, because the flag is caught in a moment of pure potentiality: the moment of unfurling. These elements then acquire additional meaning through the transcriptive linkage of national identity with an egalitarian ethos and a civic republican aesthetic. One result is that the image grounds national identity in vernacular life while attributing transcendental status to the nation.

The significance of each of the compositional designs becomes evident once one recognizes that the U.S. flag is itself a field of multiple projections; how else could it be used both to drape coffins and advertise used cars? Such projections include direct assertions of territorial conquest and possession, totemic evocations of blood sacrifice, demands for political loyalty to suppress dissent, representations of consensus, tokens of political participation, articulations of civil religion, ornamental signs of civic bonding amid a summer festival, and affirmations of political identity and rights while dissenting. Given the rich intertextuality of the iconic photo, it is unlikely that only one of these registers is in play, and probable that any of them could be activated by particular audiences. In the case of the Iwo Jima flag raising, some of the more obvious attributions are mere background: the connection between victory and territorial occupation was given only formulaic emphasis in the original publications (e.g., the *New York Times* caption, "Old Glory Goes Up Over Iwo"). With the widespread dissemination that quickly followed, the image became separated from its geographic locale in the Pacific theater and came to represent national unity on behalf of the more general objective of winning the war. Likewise, although the battle on Iwo Jima would continue for another four weeks of carnage (and over 26,000 U.S. casualties), the image has been appropriated more as a model of civic virtue than as a symbol of blood sacrifice.

The iconic appeal of this image stems in part from its ability to articulate an abstract conception of national identity through figural composition. The abstract extension of

the image is possible because the behaviors modeled are not specifically military actions, and because the actors are not behaving as if they are self-consciously affirming a cause. The soldiers are not engaged in the instrumental acts of deploying, maneuvering, or fighting, and although engaged in an act of display, there is no hint that anyone is performing for the camera.³³ The significance of this absence is evident from comparison with the follow-up photograph, which, according to the common sense of amateur photography, should be the preferred picture: There we see a larger, somewhat more varied group of men facing the camera; they are smiling, waving their weapons, and cheering before the flag whose size is evident now that it is fully unfurled.³⁴ This picture, of course, is powerless, a thoroughly conventional snapshot of men obviously acting on cue. By contrast, the power of the iconic image comes in large measure from the unselfconsciousness of those in the picture. Because of the apparent lack of artifice (including the artifice of emotional display) within the iconic photograph, the image can become a performance of war as a national event. By fusing a pure moment of military action with a sense of visual transparency, the photograph creates a truth effect: (It seems that) this is the image through which the meaning of the war can be seen.³⁵ Even more important, that meaning is teleological. The war is meaningful because it will end in victory, a victory foretold by the flag raising and equated with the raising up of the nation.³⁶

This transmutation of ordinary men into a national symbol is motivated by both the structure of the photograph and its captioning. As the only sign in the picture, the flag becomes the representative of all that signifies and is signified. It stands not just for the state, but also for *all* the values and conventions of civil society. Against the blasted scene, the flag calls the audience to the task of building their society in the same manner as the men in the picture, through sacrifice and coordinated labor. Likewise, the captions for the photograph that referred to the flag as "Old Glory" and placed the battle for Iwo Jima in line with other great battles from the Revolutionary War forward, situated World War II within a historical tableau that framed the common purpose of this war, as with all U.S. wars since the country's inception, as nation building.³⁷ Thus, the flag alone does not articulate a particular sense of nationalism or nationhood; indeed, it is an abstract and undefined symbol that fails to express any action with sufficient particularity to be the basis for allegiance. Rather, it is only when the flag is situated within the context of specific social types or signs of vernacular life that it resonates as a performance of the sociality that is the ground of politics and the motivational basis for taking up the banner of allegiance to the country. The scene and figures depicted by the photograph define the flag, and the photograph as a whole enacts a specific performance of nationalism that emphasizes coordinated effort by ordinary people toward a collective good.

This definition is reinforced by a number of smaller motifs. The flag is underscored by signs of aspiration: arms pointing, lingering upward along a rising trajectory from earth to sky.³⁸ The picture is brushed with touches of the natural sublime, from the craggy mountaintop to a sky of alternating dark and light clouds, and even the wind is flowing in the right direction. This fusion of nature and culture in a heroic uplifting gives the image a sense of destiny. Although the scene of desolation and the figures' battle dress imply that there is much work yet to be done, it will be done by a nation that has tapped into transcendental power. This power is channeled by the formal composition of the picture.³⁹ Vertical figures thrust up from a horizontal background. A strong diagonal line perfectly bisects the pictorial frame, and that high, single line to the left

leans against the men's lower massed movement to the right. The men are arrayed in action poses from a powerful kneeling figure to those stretching upward, from full body bent to the pole to those having to let go, from the forward figure wearing no equipment to supplemental gear on the back of the last figure. These oppositions extend to the deepest structure of the image, which is a fusion of dynamic action—men straining to raise the flag unfurling—in a static, permanent tableau. The corresponding implication is clear: action in history becomes transcendental, individual moral striving achieves collective immortality.

Civic Republicanism

Even conceptions of the transcendental have specific cultural inflections. This image is thought to be timeless because it conforms to a conception of political action that emphasizes how politics is constrained by history and oriented toward maintaining a community across time. The image also implies that community is achieved in part by remembering its heroes. In other words, the picture appears beautiful because it represents a traditional sense of virtue that conforms to the political style of civic republicanism:

The aesthetic sense of the republican style includes an appreciation of form and function taken from public arts such as architecture and commemorative statuary. This aesthetic favors figural representation of the civic culture and artistic definition of its public space. . . . This artistry typically displays political leaders and audiences who have figured in the history of the republic, it represents civic virtues and accounts for political achievement and the common good in terms of those virtues, and it follows habits of representation that feature the whole, clothed body and standard typifications of gender.⁴⁰

This description applies point for point to the picture, particularly as one adjusts for a martial republicanism typical of wartime. Soldiers are substituted for politicians while representing the audience on the home front through their clothes, labor, and subordination to the symbol of national unity. They epitomize common purpose and exemplify a wide range of virtues found in military action. Finally, the entire set of values is presented through and reinforced by conventional notions of masculinity. This inflection is telling; although war provides the natural setting for depicting men as aggressive, physically powerful, and fully realized in conquest, these men fulfill a more domestic version of masculinity. They are outside, working, as a team, in manual labor, to erect a symbol of collective organization. The many descriptions of the photo mirror these appeals: its beauty is synonymous with its depiction of virtue, and that virtue is deeply encoded in the conventional hierarchy and habits for organizing civic life.

This civic republican style of political representation is further articulated through monumental and quotidian appeals. "The monumental figure is the one that is supposed to extend across the entire public space and through historical time," and the quotidian example is a matter of detail "on a small scale in order to manage a specific situation."⁴¹ One reason the photo of the flag raising is so powerful is that it operates in both registers. The image has a monumental outline—a group of men dwarfed by the standard they are raising against a huge sky and distant horizon—and sculptural qualities—the massed figures are as if cut from stone, powerful yet immobile. No doubt these features and their corresponding sense of "timelessness," not just the patriotic message so familiar to the war-time audience, made for such strong extension into posters, public statuary, and war bond drives. Monumental appeal is self-limiting, however. Public statuary typically

becomes an allegory of civic republicanism itself: although still visible to subsequent generations, it is unseen or unappreciated because overly familiar and set too far above the private concerns of the individuals passing by in their day-to-day routines. The iconic photograph counters this tendency through the inadvertent reproduction of the details of everyday life, such as the swatch of undershirt on the last soldier's arm or the creases in the jacket of the first soldier. This sense of photographic detail can undercut the values being evoked by the monumental dimensions of the icon, but here it complements that dimension. The vernacular features of the photograph provide an additional basis for identification with the figures, one that is less heroic because more ordinary and so a compelling reassurance that the event is personally meaningful.¹²

These two dimensions of the republican aesthetic merge into a common telos: the heroic scale and collective victory, signified by a flag rising above the battlefield, and the common life, signified by the uniforms and coordinated actions of the soldiers laboring beneath the standard, converge in the republican ideal of consensus. Within the republican orbit, collective action requires prior and renewed commitments to the common good, commitments that are evident from setting aside personal differences and material interests. These qualities are easily identified with the action in the picture in both its monumental outline and everyday detail. Here, as rarely observed in public or private life, we see the features of everyday labor coordinated through an action taken to communicate national purpose across a great space.

This stylistic accomplishment also helps to account for the photograph's subsequent use. The flag is a timeless image of eternal national values in part because it immediately leaps across the divide between war and civil society. Set on a battlefield, it reproduces an action seen more often at civic ceremonies. More important, the republican style valorizes public arts precisely because they "are understood not so much as accounts of what happened, but as designs for imitation while preparing for events to come."¹³ If it had merely been read as a sign of success on Iwo Jima, the photograph's future would have been brief. It succeeded, however, because it so beautifully filled the need for civic statuary, because it was an example of republican artistry transposed into the public medium of the age. An actual mural or sculpture would have been consigned immediately to the back rooms of a military museum, but this was an achievement of civic artistry in photojournalism, that is, front and center within the public space created by the newspapers, news magazines, government posters, and other mass media. Within that space, the photo could function as a model for imitation, not in respect to future battlefields, but to the entire field of civic action. The republican style valorizes arts that can focus the public's attention on public values and on a civic community's need for continued service, which includes the performance of selfless action before other members of the community.

From Civic Piety to Public Cynicism

One photograph has been celebrated among all others of the Second World War not because it was the best representation of the nature of war or because it provides the strongest statement of national beliefs or power, but because it enacted the best performance of deep norms of our public culture. It was a work of civic art having the qualities of public sculpture and the features of a common life. Most important, perhaps, through the successive transcriptions from egalitarianism to nationalism to civic republicanism, the photograph directs civic action into channels of cooperation that need not

have radical implications for social change. Thus, the iconic image could appeal to the public audience while remaining consistent with the institutional interests of media and political elites. To be an icon, however, the image has to retain a sense of autonomy from either popular taste or elite interests; that autonomy comes in part from the aesthetic quality and cultural richness of the image.

We believe that the photo continues to be a force in public discourse because it is a performance of civic action that seems to be “above” the many social conflicts that emerged, first, in the post-war period, then with the cultural revolution of the Vietnam era, then again with the end of the Cold War, and now, following the events of September 11, 2001, with the advent of a new cold war that recreates a national security state defined against a transnational phenomenon. The historical details defining the photo do not direct its application. This war, that era, it doesn’t matter. What does matter is that the photo has become the single most powerful image of democratic solidarity in our culture. It has set the standard for collective action: There they are, the “greatest generation,” individuals working together, rising as one to unexpected obligation, and mutely, without question or hint of cynicism.⁴⁴ They remain individuals who will go their separate ways in private life, but when duty calls, they respond without personal regard and with the unconscious coordination that comes from a good faith acceptance of the disciplines of large-scale institutions. And they do so humbly; the defense of liberty is guaranteed by workers who take pride not in themselves but in getting the job done.

History actually falls short, but the rhetorical problem is more interesting: The formal perfection of the photograph becomes a burden as it condemns subsequent generations to a narrative of decline and fragmentation. The high degree of aesthetic cohesiveness makes its model of citizenship too distant, particularly when such civic piety is transposed to a democratic culture whose dissension and partisanship are no longer kept in check by war and older, more stringent norms of social conformity. It is no accident that this is a characteristic anxiety of civic republicanism. The image of willing subordination to the higher good of the nation has an unconscious coherence that can rarely be realized and is not often seen in the give and take of ordinary life. The ability of the image to move easily across contexts, from military to civilian life, and from one generation to those following it, also makes it a vehicle for the republican pathos of liberty’s defenders having to watch their sacrifice be squandered by those who enjoy its benefits.

Thus, a paradox emerges: the more literally a later generation reproduces the actual conduct of a prior generation, including the beliefs, norms, and structure of feeling that make that conduct meaningful, the more out of step it will be in its own time; conversely, the more it develops without regard for the dominant model of citizenship, the less virtuous it will seem. The more idealized or “timeless” the model, the more difficult its application in each successive generation. Ultimately, the most positive images available to a community would become a catalog of all it cannot do. We know from experience, however, that the process of representation somehow avoids this end state. The Iwo Jima icon demonstrates that the idealized image can continue as a basis for imitation. We already have identified the ways in which it conforms to strong conventions of aesthetic and civic composition and draws on widely available patterns of identification. An additional characteristic of this form of civic performance is that it leaves a key basis for identification undefined. From this perspective, iconic photographs operate as collective symbols that are in some sense “empty” of political

prescriptions. Put differently, iconic photographs are objects of powerful emotional identification, but no one emotion is specified. Moreover, they have to be more open to a range of individuated responses than they appear to be if they are to equip people to negotiate the persistent tension within liberal-democracy between individual autonomy and collective responsibility.

James Bradley captures the power and peculiarity of the flag image in this regard when he notes that “[t]he photograph had become a receptacle for America’s emotions; it stood for everything good that Americans wanted it to stand for.”¹⁵ The flag raising stands for “everything good,” and it may bring the audience to feel good about everything “American,” but that feeling lacks a specific anchor. Unlike many photographs, the figures in the picture provide no facial cues as to how to feel. Instead, the emotional response is evoked behaviorally and obliquely through the relation of the group to the flag above them and by their gestures of commitment to the task.

The image of the flag raising structures one example of an open and expansive public emotionality. Whether summarized as “patriotism” or “victory” or “honor,” the image constructs an emotional relationship characterized by a specific public object and a relatively undefined private affective response. Its articulation may be especially unproblematic within a visual medium; in any case, the emotional openness corresponds to the semantic emptiness of the ritual performance, and both reflect the characteristic co-production of a democratic culture: the identity of the collectivity has to be reaffirmed by an audience whose interests usually are individuated, plural, heterogeneous, conflicted, unconscious, or unspecified. The most important fact of this co-production is not the particular content held in common, but that “uptake” occurs across a range of demographic or partisan preferences.¹⁶ Obviously, the positive image and its expansive emotionality provide one means for the ongoing reproduction of this basic sense of democratic assent.

This democratic aesthetic is best recognized by tracing the ways in which the iconic photograph of the raising of the flag continues to enact civic identity for subsequent generations. As we have noted, following its initial production and dissemination in 1945 the photograph immediately became the undisputed icon for the nation’s collective victory in World War II, and shortly thereafter it became the constitutive myth for the “uncommon valor” and “common virtue” that defined the “greatest generation” as it faced the Cold War.¹⁷ Its reproductions and appropriations are too numerous to mention; its presence in public culture has been ubiquitous.

The representational meaning of the iconic photograph, however, has not remained stable or unified. Slippage has occurred with the movement from one generation to the next. So, for example, when visiting the Ted Williams [Baseball] Museum in Hernando, Florida, one finds a large photograph of the Iwo Jima Memorial prominently displayed in one of the main rooms amid an array of photographs of Williams as a fighter pilot and as a star outfielder for the Boston Red Sox. Williams served in both World War II and the Korean War, but the photographs of him here conflate the two as they articulate a larger message about the correlation between U.S. militarism and sports. Additionally, the association between the image of the flag raising and Williams, a widely recognized athlete in a culture that valorizes sports celebrities, helps to erase the anonymity so important to the egalitarian appeal of the photograph. The shift in accent can be summarized as moving from an emphasis on liberal-*democracy* (embodied in a group of anonymous figures) to *liberal*-democracy (in which the individual becomes the locus of representation).

One finds slippage in meaning in other directions as well. When the image was invoked in a Supreme Court decision over flag burning in *Texas v. Johnson*, and shortly thereafter when President George Bush announced his support for a flag desecration amendment to the Constitution while standing against the background of the Marine Corps Memorial, it was the flag itself that was reified as the focus of attention as the sacrifice and teamwork of the men hoisting it faded into the background.⁴⁸ One might think that this flag fetish and its “love it or leave it” patriotism is a baseline value of the image, but appropriations of the icon cover the full range of political positions. Examples include clear statements of dissent against the U.S. war machine (with a flower substituted for the flag or with a peace symbol emblazoned on the flag), or more oblique performances of alternative perspectives (replacing the flag and pole with a stone monolith).⁴⁹ They veer further still, including an advertisement for a brand name of blue jeans in which teenagers raise the flag that now bears the product name in place of the stars; the action to be imitated has shifted drastically from sacrifice for the common good to individual accumulation in a consumer society.⁵⁰

To end here, however, with one more critique of the commercialization of mass culture would be to miss the most important point: civic piety *always* is accompanied by its denigration. Images of virtue never reach a state of complete alienation, but they never escape some combination of ideal form and partial application. They always can be used to sell lesser goods and to represent a falling short of what should be. This dialectic acquires additional inflection in a liberal-democratic society in which the primary tension is between individualism and collectivity, a unitary collective obligation and a variegated individual response. Likewise, the central problem of civic republicanism is not doing battle with an external threat, but rather with the potential for the internal loss of virtue that fails to be transmitted from one generation to the next. Democratic action requires democratic opportunities—a state to be founded, a communal crisis to be averted, a war to be fought—and when such moments fail to appear, it becomes difficult for subsequent generations to respond “appropriately” to an image like the flag raising.

In place of seemingly direct imitation, one compensatory reaction that results is nostalgia. In the wake of the fiftieth anniversary of World War II in particular, nostalgic reproductions of the image have been rampant. The effect, of course, is to transform the representation of a particular event into a symbol for the entire war effort.⁵¹ Perhaps the most poignant instance of such nostalgia in recent years has been the publication of James Bradley’s *Flags of Our Fathers*, which spent more than 45 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list in 2000-01.⁵² Bradley details the story of the six flag raisers (one of whom was his father, Navy corpsman John Bradley) in a narrative that careens back and forth between realism and sentimentality, and finally settles on a nostalgic paternalism where “boys of common virtue” become men in combat and fathers in small towns; “it’s as simple as that.”⁵³

For many of those coming after the greatest generation, however, the image has taken on a second life. For those more accustomed to the Vietnam syndrome than to a victory culture, the image can be at once a source of guilt and betrayal.⁵⁴ To those oriented more toward upward mobility than to “raising the standard,” it can seem both a relic of the past and a sign of the impossibility of community today.⁵⁵ We can see this revitalization of the photograph in a host of appropriations that rely on the original sense of civic piety represented by the image, but then use the model to activate a dialectic

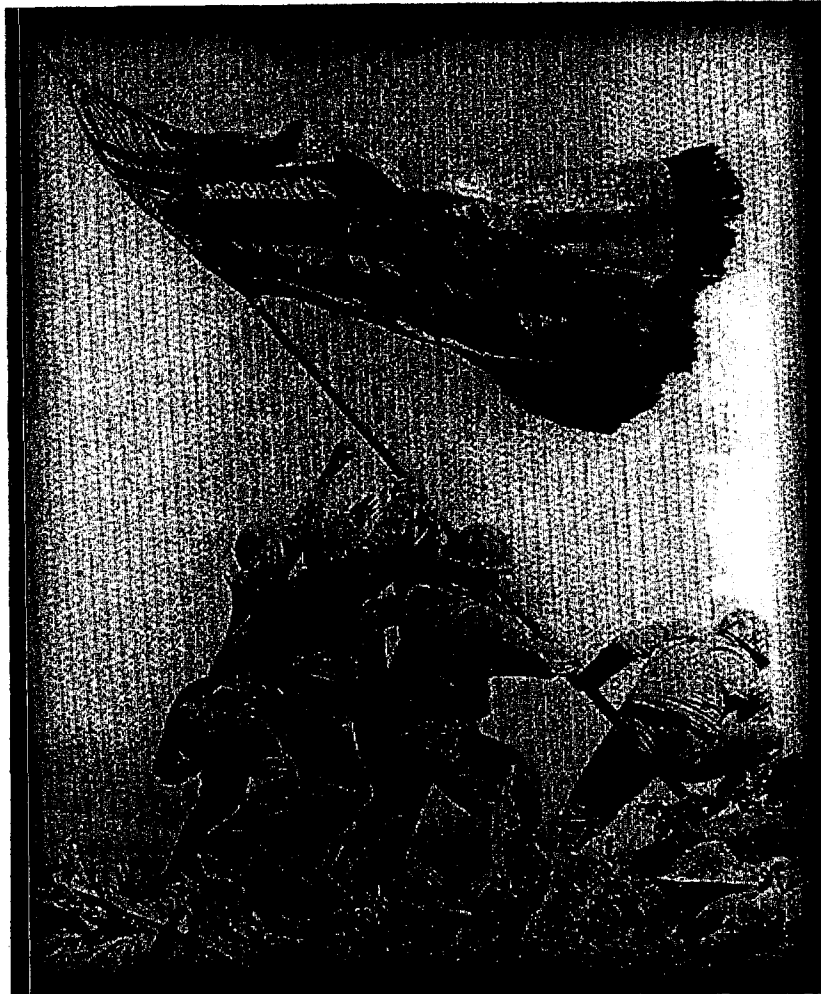


FIGURE 2
(Reprinted with the permission of Ed Chilton)

between nostalgia and cynicism that marks the public culture at a very different moment in history from the original.

An image available on the World Wide Web from Ed Chilton (Figure 2) captures many of the fundamental tensions that now are tangled up in the Iwo Jima icon.⁵⁶ Through digital substitution of a McDonald's flag for the Stars and Stripes, the artist implies that another, far worse substitution has occurred. Instead of laboring on behalf of the nation, the soldiers now serve a private corporation. Instead of sacrifice for the common good, they lift up a consumer society. The relative age and position of the two images implies that the movement upward has been from past to present, and that a society in which people worked together on behalf of the common good has become a society in which people stream through fast food lines while going their separate ways. The full implication is one of betrayal: surely men did not die for this? But, of course,

they did: the democratic victory also was on behalf of the individual's right to engage in free enterprise. Something is awry, however, for the relationship between democracy and liberalism is clearly oppositional in this image. The tacky, uniform architecture of the franchise building is in contrast to the distinctive sculptural quality of the men below. Against the impersonal façade of the building, the men now seem to represent a time of more personal, less commodified relationships. This relationship between past and present is complicated further by two other elements in the picture: the fringe on the flag is characteristic of old ceremonial flags, while the rose tint gives the picture the hue of an antique. The photo has acquired the tincture of collective memory, suggesting that what was of the past is trapped in the past, that whatever virtues the men exemplified can no longer be retrieved. The image simultaneously appeals to a nostalgic yearning for a virtuous past used to highlight the ways that the present is cheap, crass, and otherwise corrupted and corrupting.

One finds this strong use of contrast in numerous editorial cartoons that comment on public policy or public culture. In every case, the master trope is irony. As with Figure 2, a standard technique is to alter the flag. In one such cartoon the flag is being raised in Kosovo, but the flag has been inverted so that it is upside down.⁵⁷ In another, the flag has been converted into a burning dollar bill, the look on the face of George Washington is one of exasperation, while the Marine Corp Memorial is relabeled "The Drug War Memorial."⁵⁸ A related variant is to substitute some token of policy or social convention for the flagpole. As Janis Edwards and Carol Winkler have documented, examples include replacing the pole with an enormous gas pump, a female soldier whose dress is being lifted up, and a baseball bat.⁵⁹ The argument is straightforward in every case: instead of allowing our soldiers to die for oil profits, we should rein in our excessive consumption. Past soldiers would not have abused women in the military and present soldiers should not do so either. Society should be mindful of past sacrifices made to secure present freedoms, not glorify sacrifice bunts. Other techniques work in much the same manner: political figures are substituted for the soldiers, or other figures are added to make ironic comment on societal change. In a recent example, four flags are in the picture, each held by one of the four presidential or vice-presidential candidates in the 2000 campaign; the inscription reads "Ego Jima."⁶⁰ In each instance we see a pronounced public cynicism that gains its rhetorical force from its ironic tension with the original narrative of civic piety. The point of such cartoons is a critique of contemporary circumstances and in particular of self-interested behaviors that fail to live up to the ideals embodied in the original.

The point is made most clearly in an episode of *The Simpsons* entitled "Selma's Choice." Homer Simpson, the paragon of unfettered desire, is bequeathed a collection of potato chips molded in the form of celebrities "such as Otto Van Bismarck and Jay Leno." When he comes across a potato chip in the form of the flag being planted on Mt. Suribachi, he immediately acknowledges its cultural significance by uttering "Uh-oh!" Then, after contemplating it for no more than two seconds, he succumbs to temptation, pops it in his mouth, and eats it.⁶¹ Instead of the individual sacrificing himself to the community, we have the communal icon being sacrificed to the most banal of individual desires, the impulse to eat junk food. The image, which began as a sacred emblem of the nation's greatest collective achievement and a model of civic identity, is profaned in potato paste as a symbol of the nation's love affair with commercial consumption and an unbridled and fragmented individualism. The selfless, heroic citizen has become the

acquisitive and consumptive individual; liberal-democracy has been reduced to liberalism.⁶²

This tension between nostalgia and cynicism is highlighted in a *New York Times* article of April 23, 2001, by Rick Marin titled "Raising A Flag For Generation W.W. II," and accompanied by a 9" x 9" artist's rendition of the flag-raising image with disproportionately large photographs of the heads of Tom Hanks, Ben Affleck, Tom Brokaw, and George W. Bush (each adorned with a WW II style army helmet) attached to the bodies of the men raising the flag. Marin identifies the four men in the picture as members of a "not-so-great generation" living in "cushy times" who have helped to fuel an "immense national neurosis" focused on pining for the virtues associated with World War II. Against the excessive pursuit of pleasure today, the veterans are extolled as "a truly inspiring generation because they were so pure in their belief and willing to lay down their lives at the drop of a hat. It seemed like they put their country before themselves." Yet Marin makes clear that those purchasing nostalgia today have no real comprehension of or desire for the lack of self-consciousness embodied in the behavior of the "greatest generation." The artist's rendition is telling here in its difference from the original photograph: the faces of the flag raisers are not only recognizable, but they also dwarf everything in the picture, including the flag. They are portrayed as individuals, not members of a team working towards a collective goal, and they are entrepreneurs, each of whom has achieved private economic success as a result of his exploitation of public sentiments. The image remains recognizable as the iconic photograph, but its meaning has been turned on its head. Marin underscores the point with his own cynicism, "Mr. Brokaw quotes [FDR's] exhortation: 'This generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny.' Americans of a comparable age now have a rendezvous with their dot.com destiny, but that's it."⁶³

For all his cynicism, Marin is guilty of his own version of nostalgia: as he vilifies the "not so great generation" for its overt romanticizing of World War II as a sort of "extreme sport," he continues to yearn for what he takes to be the "truly" great generation that was "clear-eyed," "unsentimental," and unselfconscious. The closing words of the article are telling in this regard: "What's admirable about the men and women of the greatest generation is that they didn't think they were." The illustration captures this sentiment perfectly with its alterations in magnitude: oversized heads of ego-driven individuals intrude into a world in which individuals did not loom so large.

With this example, the use of the icon comes full circle, returning to its original transcriptions of egalitarianism, nationalism, and civic republicanism. In order to articulate harsh criticism of contemporary society, artist and editorialist alike recall a time when civic actors were equals—proportionate to each other—and dedicated to the common good—proportionate to the standard. As such, they were fitting models for subsequent imitation. The linkage between these ideals and photojournalism also is highlighted, perhaps inadvertently, when the loss of visible virtues is coordinated with the change from the seemingly transparent photo to the obviously crafted illustration. Likewise, the vision of a greatest generation also depends on a certain naiveté regarding the public media: because the flag raisers weren't posing for competitive display or aware of being recorded, their performance of civic virtue was assumed to be authentic. Because the medium was assumed to be a transparent mode of representation, they were assumed to be as they looked. These assumptions coincide to allow the formal perfection of the image to become a means for articulating an ideal of democratic

practice, while the image itself can be used to anchor those ideals in public discourse and particularly in the print media.

Of course, this combination of public naiveté and artistic excellence is a recipe for both manipulation and cynicism, and the possibility of the former provides a continuing rationale for articulating the latter. Furthermore, as the icon is reproduced and disseminated widely over time, it becomes easier to code it cynically. Thus, the original transcriptions in turn motivate an attitudinal trajectory that may be deeply embedded in liberal-democratic public address. This range of attitudes runs from civic piety to irony to nostalgia to cynicism. These stages are represented in the Iwo Jima appropriation by the war bond drive, the editorial cartoons faulting later military policy, the many commemorative reproductions, and the digital alterations of the photo to condemn contemporary liberalism.

The dominant oppositions at this point in this history seem to be between nostalgia and cynicism and between democratic and liberal norms. Indeed, one might think of the first tension as characteristic of a predominately *liberal*-democratic society. It also might be a tension that is more likely to be activated in respect to commemorations of war. As war memories are acknowledged publicly, they lend themselves to a mixture of powerful feeling among those having direct experience of war's suffering and incomprehension among the rest of the audience. What iconic photos add to this mix is a considerable capacity for reflexivity. Appropriations of the iconic image can activate a range of emotions and attitudes without violating the aura of the original because of how the photographic icon functions performatively. Because any photographic image is an object of repetition, it is capable of framing that event for reflection before multiple audiences over indefinite periods of time. Because photojournalism is a socially inflected embodiment of public concerns, it evokes the social knowledge and emotional responsiveness necessary for alternative interpretations. Because it is known to be an artistically distinctive moment (or monument), and in circulation within the public culture, it is a site for discussion, controversy, multiple projections, visual allusion, and other articulations of pluralism within a still decidedly mainstream medium.

Thus, the iconic photograph is a means to read the public culture at any given period because it becomes a site for negotiating basic attitudes toward polity. This negotiation depends on a performative reflexivity that will be constituted by the historical development of photojournalism (and not just by the individual photograph), but it also is more likely to be activated by those photographs that have the artistic qualities of a command performance. Likewise, strong ideological structuration has to be there for the reflexivity to be possible and potent, and any use of the photo to mitigate ideological constitutions of identity will always be in tension with the pull of the dominant structures and their incarnation in the illusion of transparency attending the original image. We have argued that some photos are capable of becoming potent vehicles for mediating liberal democratic culture because they have strong qualities of artistic performance, a series of transcriptions that carry deep resources for public identification, and a lack of topical definition and a corresponding open emotionality that facilitate the metaphoric carryover from the specific historical moment to civic life generally.

Whether it inspires us to civic duty or condemns us for personal egotism, whether on behalf of solidarity or *ressentiment*, whatever turn it may be given in the continuing articulation of visual rhetoric, the iconic photograph of the raising of the flag on Mt. Suribachi continues to be a measure of and force within U.S. public life as an enduring image and as a vital resource for public representation.

“In An Echo of Iwo Jima”

While we were completing this essay terrorists hijacked commercial airliners and used them as guided missiles to attack two architectural icons of U.S. hegemony: the World Trade Center in Manhattan, and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. In the blink of an eye on live television and then over and over again, the nation watched as thousands of lives were destroyed. The national media response was comprehensive, including everything from special editions of newspapers and news magazines to new stories quickly added to entertainment magazines such as *Country Weekly* and to campus newsletters like the *IU Homepage*. The coverage also may have been a high-water mark for photojournalism, as this profoundly visual event was immediately converted via digital technologies to thousands of color photos disseminated through the print media and their websites. This visual coverage repeatedly joined images of the destruction with depictions of the emotional reactions of ordinary people. As their shock, fear, grief, and despair was communicated through the mass media, and while government leaders were struggling to craft organizational and rhetorical strategies for state action, a direct and comprehensive emotional response to the event was modeled visually for a national audience.

This visual representation of the event soon developed a narrative logic for reconstituting the public audience as a unified nation whose civic virtue guaranteed triumph over the disaster. Images of rescue workers, still-standing buildings, blood drives, and the Statue of Liberty were all part of the mix, and by the end of the week a nationwide flag mania was beginning.⁶⁴ Indeed, by the week's end it was almost impossible to find any photographic representation of the event that did not include or was not somehow framed by a representation of the U.S. flag. Flag images dominated front pages and every section of the print media, flags were distributed in every available medium from newspaper inserts to decals, the Pledge of Allegiance was reintroduced into schools and civic rituals, and, of course, more than one retailer got into the act. The shift in emphasis emotionally was notable: fear and anger had not disappeared, but rather than accentuate resignation and despair, they were transformed into repeated performances of civic pride.

The many thousands of pictures taken of the September 11th attacks and their aftermath included hundreds of outstanding photographs, and although flag images were predictable, there were many striking images of patriotism and resolve. Remarkably, one image quickly became elevated above the others as the iconic representation of the event. We refer to the image of three firefighters raising the U.S. flag amid the rubble that hours before had been the World Trade Center. Within days it was transformed from a single representation of a news event into a historic marker for the disaster and an interpretive frame for national response.

A number of different images (from several angles) of this event circulated through the media, but the one that quickly took pride of place was shot by Thomas E. Franklin of *The Record*, a Bergen County, New Jersey, daily newspaper, and appeared on the front page on September 12, 2001 (Figure 3).⁶⁵

It was picked up and displayed on the front page of newspapers across the nation, as well as by network and cable television stations.⁶⁶ It began to appear on countless websites; became the opening image of a Power Point presentation titled “Still Flying” that circulated internationally as an e-mail attachment; was used by *Newsweek* as the cover for its special report “After the Terror,” by *Time* as the cover for its special report

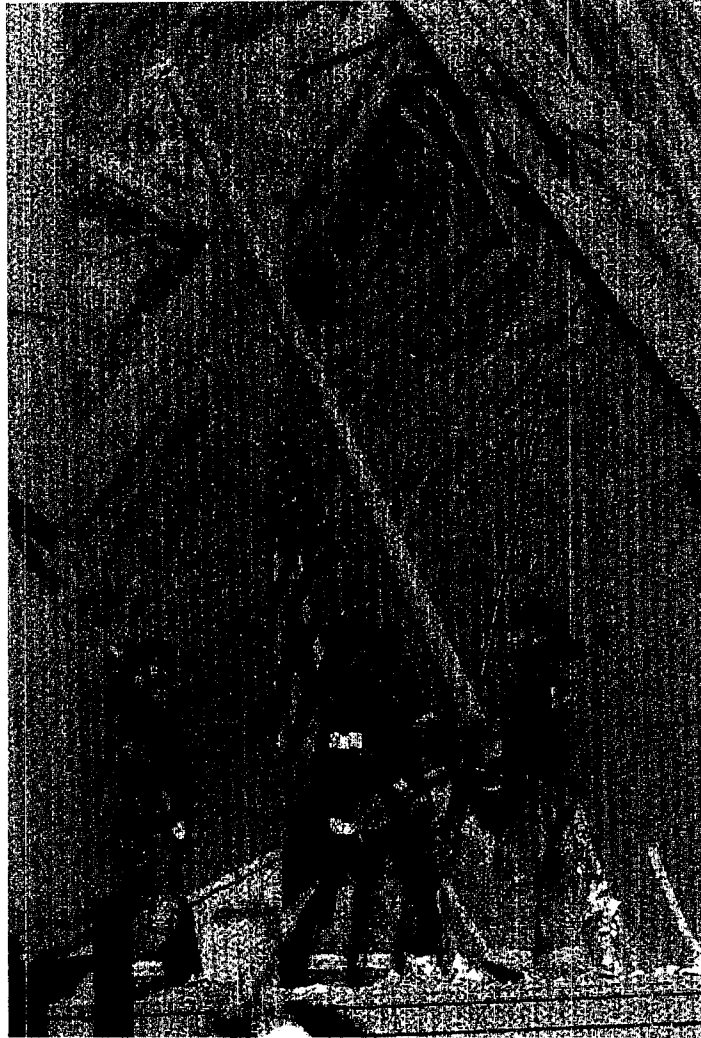


FIGURE 3

© 2001 The Record (Bergen County, N.J.) Thomas E. Franklin Staff Photographer
www.groundzerospirit.org and www.thebravestfund.com

“Time for Kids,” by *Life* as the cover for its annual *Life: The Year in Pictures*, by Britannica as the cover for its *2001 Year in Review*, and by *People Weekly* as the centerpiece of the cover for its annual double issue dedicated to “The 25 Most Intriguing People of 2001”; it also appeared in numerous video montages shown on national television, including many that were displayed prominently during Sunday afternoon football coverage on the Fox Network, CBS, and ESPN, as well as during ABC’s Monday evening NFL Game of the Week.⁶⁷ It was reenacted at both the 2001 World Series and the 2002 Super Bowl. It also has been displayed as a special commemorative button, a framed collectible, a stained glass window, a bumper sticker, and decal (all available at e-Bay.com), and it has been featured as a colorized silver dollar and a gold plated

Christmas ornament.⁶⁸ There was an immediate call to establish a memorial park at ground zero in Manhattan that would include a statue of the firefighters raising the flag, and there were so many requests for copies of the photograph that *The Record* initially set up a special website for distributing free electronic copies (for use as “wallpaper” on a computer monitor), as well as 8 1/2” x 11” prints and larger posters for a small donation to a disaster relief fund. Subsequently that website has been devoted to outlining the criteria and procedures for acquiring permission to use the photograph on anything from book covers to coffee mugs, t-shirts, and much more.⁶⁹ Early in 2002 the photograph began to earn numerous awards, including the AP Managing Editor’s “Photograph of the Year” and the National Press Photographers Association’s “Attack on America Feature” photograph of the year.⁷⁰ On March 11, 2002, the six-month anniversary of the September 11th attack, President Bush held a special ceremony in the Oval Office of the White House where he was joined by the three firefighters and revealed a 45¢ stamp that reproduced the image of the photograph.⁷¹

What we find noteworthy is that this is the first instance of an iconic photograph being created out of the template of a predecessor.⁷² The point is made most clearly by the ways in which the two photographs have been juxtaposed across the field of public representation. *People* magazine captioned one version of the photograph as “an echo of Iwo Jima.”⁷³ Tim Russert referred to it on NBC’s *Meet The Press* as “Our New Iwo Jima,” underscoring the connection between *then* and *now*, a linkage made even more pronounced on numerous websites that seamlessly juxtaposed the new image with its original, side-by-side and moving from left to right—past to present—to create a single image of the two as moments in time connected by a common motivation.⁷⁴ This correspondence was evident to others as well, including the photographer: “As soon as I shot it, I realized the similarity to the famous image of Marines raising the flag at Iwo Jima.”⁷⁵ The *New York Post* saw it the same way and enlisted James Bradley, Jr., to spell out the analogy, which he did, from the “spontaneous” origin of each photo to the egalitarian virtues and related “sentiments” held in common by the soldiers and firefighters.⁷⁶ This association continues in both visual production of and commentary on the image. Perhaps the most rhetorically transparent example is a History Channel spot entitled “A History of Courage.” The composition mixes written text from the Declaration of Independence, oral remarks by JFK, LBJ, FDR, and George W. Bush, a split-screen image of soldiers marching (above) and firefighters walking (below), and a series of flag images—at first in the background but culminating in moving pictures of the original Iwo Jima flag raising that segue into the new icon.⁷⁷ The Iwo image is captioned by Bush’s voice, and the last image with a written text, “The History of the Spirit of America.”

This doubling of the original image into the second is supported by two other developments in the public discourse generated by the attack: the prevalence of the Iwo Jima image in other visual rhetoric in the aftermath of the disaster and revision of the previous discourse regarding “the greatest generation.” No less than nine editorial cartoons using the Iwo Jima image appeared in newspapers and on the wire services within one week of September 11th.⁷⁸ In each cartoon we get the identical, full integration of the two photographs, such that the flag raising itself imitates the figural composition of the original photograph of the Marines on Iwo Jima planting the flag, but this image is then transplanted to the rubble of the World Trade Center with fire fighters, policeman, and other rescue workers prominently substituted for U.S. Marines. These illustrations in turn were buttressed by unmarked use of the Iwo Jima image in

photo montages and by references to the icon that appeared across a range of print and digital media.⁷⁹

These verbal references led directly to the many editorials, letters, and other commentary that appeared in both media to praise contemporary rescue workers, generational cohorts, and citizens generally for their embodiment of the older virtues or their willingness to make the equivalent sacrifices.⁸⁰ For example, "I have been struck by the picture that many of you have seen in the papers of the firefighters raising the flag in NY. It brings to mind the raising of the flag on Iwo Jima during WWII. History repeats itself in many ways. Let us follow the guidance of that greatest generation as they fought and defeated evil. I am confident our generation will display the same courage and strength as they did."⁸¹ The common message was made especially clear in a cartoon strip that has police "spontaneously" recreate the original flag raising, albeit this time in front of an approving public audience.⁸² Police now are like soldiers then, the war on terrorism now is like war between nations then, and—note the addition to the composition—the public now is like the public then.

As the visual and verbal allusions make clear, the analogy emphasizes precisely those features of the original that distinguish it as a moment of visual eloquence. The firefighters are both featured in the commentary yet consistently and emphatically denominated by their anonymity and working class norms of hard physical labor, self-sacrifice, and loyalty. The assertion of an identical response now-as-then reassures the civic republican anxiety about virtue being reproduced across the generations, while it repeatedly is captioned to emphasize consensus and the moral purpose of the republic. Captioning also underscores the nationalism of the image: the text on the *Newsweek* cover photo reads, "After the Terror God Bless America." This nationalism is directed by the image, in which all three firefighters are looking up to the flag, yet the photo's prominence amid all the other flag photos—many of which show the flag itself to better advantage—derives from the way that the composition grounds the flag in a material embodiment of the civic virtues it represents.

There are additional connections as well. In each instance the photograph was taken within an event still unfolding amid great loss, and it acquires predictive power while redefining the event in terms of a still-unrealized victory. Both photos are of incidental acts of display, and their news value is limited, yet each has become the definitive image for commemorating the event and motivating civic action. The pole cuts across the frame on the same diagonal in both compositions, while the flag itself is moved upward by coordinated effort. The flag raising is situated in a scene of barren devastation; there is no direct sign of the absent enemy who nevertheless remains a threat, whether lurking in caves or living among us. Against this tableau of destruction and absence are anonymous, uniformed figures working together selflessly and without regard for their personal safety. Notice, too, that in each instance the particular tools of their profession—guns, fire hoses, flashlights—are either missing or de-emphasized, muted by shadows and/or complementary colors. The central action of each photograph is forward looking as it visually collapses past and present into a promised future that is to be created by all citizens working together. These are not pictures of "war," however much the precipitating events and surrounding discourse might suggest otherwise, but of the reconstitution of civic virtues manifested within intersecting transcriptions of egalitarianism, nationalism, and civic republicanism.

There are a few differences within the visual field created by the two icons that also are notable, not least because they reflect changes in the public culture. The changes

involve, first, a softening of the ideological categories that dominated the original photo's reception, and, second, a somewhat more liberal articulation of democratic solidarity. In the new icon and all of the cartoons using the older image, the figures are not soldiers per se but rather public service workers who adopt some but not all of the elements of military organization. Thus, the shift from military to civilian articulation of a shared commitment has already happened within the image itself. This potential difference is pushed farther in two of the cartoonists' transpositions of the Iwo Jima image into the disaster scene, as those illustrations include women among the figures raising the flag.⁸² Contemporary egalitarianism still is represented primarily by images of the working class, but the composite implication is that the United States of America is a pluralistic society in which solidarity includes expanded recognition of equal contributions and equal rights of other citizens, while civic action is directed through a range of predominately civilian activities.

Here too, however, we must acknowledge that the multiple transcriptions of liberal-democracy within the image open it to a range of interpretations that oscillate between secular piety, nostalgia, and cynicism. So, for example, even as cartoonists' revisions of the photograph to include women were met with silence in the public discourse, the effort to incorporate a racial element into a memorial statue of the image unleashed a firestorm of criticism. The ensuing debate achieved a sort of stasis between those demanding a memorial that was "historically accurate" and those demanding one that acknowledged the "multi-cultural diversity" of those who contributed to the common effort of response to the attack. In the end there was no easy accommodation and the decision to build a memorial statue was tabled.⁸³

These domestic alterations lead to the second variation on the Iwo Jima template. Notice that in the new icon we can see the faces of the three firefighters raising the flag. Although, *vide* the *New York Post*, their voluntary anonymity is an important piece in the mythic construction of the icon as a legitimate heir of the original, the newer image provides an additional means for putting a human face on the tragedy that buried thousands in a mass grave, and, not incidentally, it depicts individual reactions to the event. As opposed to being melded together into a single, massed effort needed to complete their task, the three firefighters are standing apart from one another. Indeed, like the audience for the photograph, they are united primarily by an act of coordinated seeing. As that vision is focused on the rise of the flag, so the nation is an abstract basis for unity among individuals who otherwise remain distinct from one another in their separate standpoints. We wonder if this inflection resonates with another strain of public discourse that has been actively promoted since September 11th, which is the appeal to fulfill one's civic duty by continuing previous levels of retail consumption.⁸⁴ If, as in the new icon, civic actors are still separate individuals, then perhaps individual gratification can coincide with civic duty. Liberal individuals acting independently in a free market are not a model for democratic action on behalf of the common good, and buying for one's self-gratification is a far cry from buying war bonds (and so depleting one's discretionary income), but perhaps one can believe that individual shopping sprees and continued accumulation of consumer goods could reverse the economic losses from the attack. Although the predominance of the two flag raisings in the visual commemoration of the disaster is an important element in the resurgence of democratic solidarity that has dominated media coverage and public response in the period following September 11th, both the appropriations of the older image and the inflections in the new one suggest

that liberalism has become more pervasive in the public culture than was evident in the photograph from 1945.

Yet even that is not the end of the story. In no time the appeal for patriotic retail consumption had become an object of satire, including two cartoons that used the Iwo Jima template. In the first of these, the soldiers labor to erect a tower of boxes labeled “printer,” “microwave,” and—at the top—“big screen TV.”⁸⁵ In the second, the flag remains, but the soldiers have been replaced with a horde of shoppers bedecked with shopping bags.⁸⁶ Once again, the iconic image has been appropriated to fault the present for its falling away from the civic virtues of the past; once again, the difference is between self-sacrifice on behalf of a common good and the individual pursuit of privatized self-gratification. Amid a comprehensive resurgence of nationalism, and one that included pervasive use of the Iwo Jima icon to revoke the discourse of generational decline and celebrate a re-emergence of civic virtue, the iconic image continues to oscillate in a discursive field between pious and cynical articulations of national character.⁸⁷

The point of all this is perhaps a simple one, but worth emphasizing nonetheless. Photojournalistic icons operate as powerful resources within a public culture, not because of their fixed meaning, but rather because they artistically coordinate available structures of identification within a performative space open to continued and varied articulation. If these images are important elements of public identity, then scholars will have to readjust some of their conceptions of how identity is constituted. Both traditional conceptions of persuasive appeal and modern methods of ideology critique are needed to explicate the icon, although neither approach alone will capture how collective identity is negotiated aesthetically. Likewise, explanations of specific symbols such as the flag or specific ideological formations such as nationalism will need to recognize that specific images and their appropriation, which are endemic to public discourse, are a means of transmission and of inflection and critique.

Our study of the Iwo Jima photograph identifies some of the complexities involved in the use and representation of such an image. When the photograph first appeared in 1945, it was fundamentally an expression of secular piety for a social order compelled by circumstances to underscore the collective responsibilities of liberal-democracy. In the wake of the social turmoil associated with the Vietnam War, however, and following the end of the Cold War, the accent within U.S. public culture shifted from democracy and the *public* demands of collectivity to liberalism and the *private* needs of the individual. With that shift, reproductions and appropriations of the Marines raising the flag became the performative marker of a cultural tension that slowly had worked its way to the surface, signaling alternating attitudes of nostalgia (for a past that never was) and cynicism (about a future that seemingly never could be). The bombing of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon changed that, creating a crisis that once more shifted the accent in the direction of democratic solidarity. This renewed emphasis has been the result of many forms of public communication, but it seems undeniable that visual images have played an important role. Public identity is negotiated in an event-driven process of performance and response, a process epitomized by its most prominent visual artifact, the iconic photograph. Icons such as the flag raising on Iwo Jima sometimes contribute to an affirmation of patriotic citizenship, and at other times, they operate as a critique of prevailing cultural beliefs and practices. Whether objects of veneration or disparagement, they exemplify the importance of visual rhetoric in the democratic project.

Notes

Robert Hariman is Levitt Professor of Rhetoric in the Department for the Study of Culture and Society at Drake University. John Louis Lucaites is Associate Professor in the Department of Communication and Culture at Indiana University.

¹Karal Ann Marling and John Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima: Monuments, Memories, and the American Hero* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 72.

²James Bradley (with Ron Powers), *Flags of Our Fathers* (New York: Bantam Books, 2000), 220.

³"Photographer Gets Praise for War Job," *New York Times*, February 25, 1945, 22.

⁴"Arms, Character, Courage," *Time*, March 5, 1945, 15. As W. J. T. Mitchell notes, "all media are mixed media," and one cannot consider photojournalism apart from the headlines, titles, captions, and other verbal texts with which it is imbricated, all of which have the capacity to influence its reception. See W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 5.

⁵"Art from Life in Defiance of Death," *Times-Union*, February 27, 1945, cited in Marling and Wetenhall, 77.

⁶A.B.R. Shelley, Letter to Editor, *New York Times*, March 12, 1945, 18.

⁷For the role that the photograph played in the Seventh Bond Drive, see Marling and Wetenhall, 102-21, and Bradley, 281-95. On the issuance of the postage stamp see Marling and Wetenhall, 92-94, and Sol Glass, *United States Postage Stamps: 1945-1952* (West Somerville, MA: Bureau Issues Association, n.d.), 18.

⁸Hal Buell, *Moments: The Pulitzer Prize-Winning Photographs—A Visual Chronicle of Our Time* (New York: Black Dog and Leventhal Pub., 1999), 21-23.

⁹Joe Rosenthal with W. C. Heinz, "Picture That Will Live Forever," *Collier's*, February 18, 1955, 62; Vicki Goldberg, *The Power of Photography: How Photographs Changed Our Lives* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), 143. In addition to the multitude of commodities on which the image has been emblazoned, it is regularly sold as a commemorative statue cast in everything from lead to bronze and gold. It also has been the basis of at least two major Hollywood movie productions (*The Sands of Iwo Jima* and *The Outsider*), a made for TV movie (*The American*), a History Channel, A&E Television Network documentary (*Heroes of Iwo Jima*), and a ballet (*Uncommon Valor*) by Houston choreographer Timothy Levine (<http://www.houstonpress.com/issues/2000-11-02/dance.html>). Additionally, it is regularly reenacted at parades, reunions, and other civic events.

¹⁰A representative sample of websites that feature the photograph include: Iwo Jima and the U. S. Marine Corps (<http://members.tripod.com/~vet5/index.html>), the Iwo Jima Website (<http://www.iwojima.com/index.cfm>), Art's Iwo Jima Flag History Web Page (<http://www.members.aol.com/iwoart.htm>), and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Flag Education Web Page ([http://www.vfwpost7401.org/Flag Education%20.html](http://www.vfwpost7401.org/Flag%20Education%20.html)).

¹¹The examples are almost too numerous to list. It is referred to explicitly by Chief Justice Rehnquist in his dissenting opinion in the celebrated First Amendment flag burning case, *Texas v. Johnson* 109 S. Ct. 2550 (1989), and Goldberg reports that Congressman Ron Marlenee called that decision "a shot in the back" to the "marines who raised the country's banner over Iwo Jima" (147). The photograph appeared prominently in President Clinton's 1996 campaign film shown on national television during the Democratic National Convention: *A Place Called America*, directed and produced by Linda Bloodworth-Thomason (Mozark Productions, 1996). It is frequently referred to on websites that emphasize "American Patriotism" and appears as a common topos in articles and letters to the editor on topics ranging from abortion to gun control and medical care. For its wide use in editorial cartoons see Janis K. Edwards and Carol L. Winkler, "Representative Form and the Visual Ideograph: The Iwo Jima Image in Editorial Cartoons," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83 (1997): 269-89.

¹²See, e.g., Michael Calvin McGee, "In Search of 'The People': A Rhetorical Alternative," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61 (1975): 235-49; Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Québécois*," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 133-150; Louis Althusser, "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

¹³Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," *Public Culture* 14 (2002): 49-90.

¹⁴Warner, 77.

¹⁵Warner, 57.

¹⁶Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

¹⁷Few viewers know that the figure in the rear is Ira Hayes, a Pima Indian.

¹⁸For related work, see Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, "Dissent and Emotional Management in a Liberal-Democratic Society: The Kent State Iconic Photograph," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 31 (2001): 5-31.

¹⁹Our sense of performance is drawn primarily from work in anthropology. Richard Bauman summarizes this perspective in "Performance," *International Encyclopedia of Communications*, vol. 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 262-66; see also *Verbal Art as Performance* (Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1984). The concept of restored behavior comes from Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985). For superb discussion of the concept, see Bert O. States, "Performance as Metaphor," *Theatre Journal* 48 (1996): 1-26.

²⁰Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 32.

²¹David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968; originally printed 1888), 317. For a review of contemporary work on the social construction of emotions see Brent Malin, "Communication with Feeling: Emotion, Publicness, and Embodiment," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 87 (2001): 216-35. See also

Catherine Lutz and Lila Abu-Luhod, eds. *Language and the Politics of Emotion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and Gillian Bendelow and Simon J. Williams, *Emotions in Social Life: Critical Themes and Contemporary Issues* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

²²See Roland Barthes, "The Rhetoric of the Image," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 32-51; and *Camera Lucida*, John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC and Penguin Books, 1972); James Elkins, *The Object Stares Back: On The Nature of Seeing* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace, 1996).

²³We borrow the term "transcription" from Umberto Eco, "Critique of the Image," in Victor Burgin, ed., *Thinking Photography* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 33.

²⁴The contemporary problem of citizenship in liberal-democratic society is treated in a number of places. See Ronald Beiner, ed. *Theorizing Citizenship* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995); Ronald Beiner, *What's the Matter with Liberalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 98-141; Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997); Gary Jeffrey Jacobsohn and Susan Dunn, eds., *Diversity and Citizenship: Rediscovering American Nationhood* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996); Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997); and Michael Schudson, *The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1998).

²⁵Kenneth Burke, "Literature as Equipment for Living," in *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 293-304.

²⁶George H. Roeder, Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 80.

²⁷Paul Fussell, "Images of Anonymity: World War II in Black and White," *Harper's*, Sept. 1979, 77.

²⁸This body-object articulation is also a disciplinary technique that has numerous instantiations in civilian life. Although amid the lack of ceremony characterizing the battlefield, the soldiers' coordinated action still provides a "rhetoric of honor" maintaining military prestige while resonating with disciplinary norms throughout civil society. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979), 135, 153-54.

²⁹Fussell, 77.

³⁰Buell, 23.

³¹Roeder, 43-66.

³²Bradley, 342.

³³Display was one motive of the officer who ordered the flag raising. The flag in the photo is the second one raised that day on Mt. Suribachi. The second flag raising was conducted so that the 2nd Battalion could retain the original flag as a souvenir. The order to substitute flags also specified that a bigger flag should be used, and the men raising it were told that it was so everyone on the island could see it. As it happened, the first flag raising produced a large, spontaneous celebration by the troops on land and sea, while the second went largely unnoticed at the time. See Bradley, 207-209; and the *Heroes of Iwo Jima*, a History Channel documentary originally broadcast on the A&E Television Network on June 17, 2001.

³⁴*New York Times*, February 28, 1945, 3. It was displayed along with five other photographs of the landing and invasion of Iwo Jima.

³⁵The importance of the perceived transparency of the image is brought home in a controversy concerning its authenticity that has hounded the photograph from the beginning: Was this a "real" flag raising or a reenactment performed for the camera? The controversy was fueled by two ambiguities: First, it actually was the second flag raised that day. The second is a confusion created because Rosenthal shipped his film to Guam prior to developing it or having seen any of the images. When he arrived in Guam he met a correspondent who had seen the pictures, commented on how great the "flag" picture was, and asked if he had posed it. Mistakenly thinking that they were talking of the group shot taken after the flag raising, Rosenthal said "sure." Another correspondent overheard the first part of the conversation and reported that the scene had been a reenactment. Concerned about the authenticity of the image, both *Time* and *Life* initially refused to publish the photograph. *Time* recanted the following week (March 5, 1945), but the photograph did not appear in *Life* until a month later (March 26, 1945) when it reported that the flag raising had become "one of the most talked about pictures of the war (17)." See Rosenthal, "Pictures That Will Live Forever"; and Marling and Wattenhall, 77-78.

³⁶Goldberg, 143; and Michael Griffin, "The Great War Photographs: Constructing Myths of History and Photojournalism" in *Picturing the Past: Media, History, and Photography*, ed. Bonnie Brennen and Hanno Hardt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 144.

³⁷See, e.g., *Time*, March 5, 1945, 15; *Life*, March 26, 1945, 17.

³⁸Fussell, 77.

³⁹The formal virtues of the picture are evident by contrast to the surrounding frames of the movie film shot at the same time from the same spot. See Bradley, *Flags of Our Fathers*.

⁴⁰Robert Hariman, *Political Style: The Artistry of Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 128-29.

⁴¹Hariman, 131, 132.

⁴²On the importance of "vernacular culture" to the development of public memory, and especially to U.S. patriotism, see John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 13-20.

¹⁹Hariman, 129.

²⁰The phrase "greatest generation," which has become a common reference to Americans who came of age during the Great Depression and World War II, was initiated by Tom Brokaw in *The Greatest Generation* (New York: Random House, 1998).

²¹Bradley, 282.

²²On "securing uptake," see James Bohman, *Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity, and Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press, 1996), 58-9, 116-18; and J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, 2nd ed., ed by J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 101.

²³Following the battle for Iwo Jima, Admiral Chester A. Nimitz summed up the Marine effort in a communique dated March 16, 1945, that read: "Among the Americans who served on Iwo island, uncommon valor was a common virtue." It was later inscribed on the base of the Marine Corps Memorial, and it appears as the caption to some of the appropriations of the photographic image. Cited in Marling and Wettenhall, 1.

²⁴See Goldberg, 147; and Madeline Albright, Secretary of State, Condon-Falknor Distinguished Lecture, University of Washington School of Law Seattle, Washington, October 29, 1998 at <http://usembassy.state.gov/posts/in1/www/nov.html>.

²⁵The Vietnam era poster with a flower replacing the flag is reproduced in Goldberg, 146. The alternative that substitutes a flag with a peace symbol for the American flag is reprinted in Carol Wells, et al., *Decades of Protest: Political Posters From the US, Vietnam and Cuba, 1965-1975* (Los Angeles: Center for the Study of Political Graphics, 1996); it is also used regularly at www.alternet.org to identify anti-war stories. The appropriation that substitutes a stone monolith is the logo for a website that parodies the assumptions of human evolutionary progress by giving voice to a group called "Some People." See http://www.supportthemonolith.org/images/monolith_sm.jpg.

²⁶The ad for "h.i.s. Men's Jeans" appeared in 1990 and is reproduced in Goldberg, 146.

²⁷In 1995, for example, the History Channel produced and marketed a five-volume video collection, *World War II: The War Chronicles*. The Iwo Jima photograph is superimposed over a map of Europe (which was not in the Pacific theater, the last time we checked) and then displayed across the spine of all five videos such that the removal of any one tape from its slip case leaves the picture incomplete. *World War II: The War Chronicles*, Lon Reda Productions, The History Channel, A&E Television Network, 1995.

²⁸*Flags of Our Fathers* was published in a paperback edition in October, 2001, and in an abridged edition for "younger readers." See James Bradley and Ron Powers, *Flags of Our Fathers: Heroes of Iwo Jima*, adapted by Michael French (New York: Bantam, 2001).

²⁹Bradley, 341-42. See also the A&E documentary *Heroes of Iwo Jima*.

³⁰Katherine Kinney observes that "Iwo Jima haunts the Vietnam War literature," and the key trope for that haunting is "the flag raising." See *Friendly Fire: American Images of the Vietnam War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 6-7.

³¹The flag raising is parodied in an episode of *The Simpsons* in which Bart becomes a member of a boy band. As part of a video, Bart and his band members, dressed in military camouflage, parachute onto a beachhead and proceed to plant the flag in the exact pose of the original with the camera focused on their legs and backs. In the immediate next scene we discover that they had parachuted into a beach party; what appeared originally to be a flagpole turns out to be a tetherball pole; and rather than training for civic leadership, Bart and his friends play with three curvaceous, bikini-clad girls. The ideal of masculinity central to the original image is given comic exaggeration here, but the main point is that it is a fantasy. Bart is no more going to live in the imagined community of babes and beach than he is to become a war hero. See *The Simpsons*, "New Kids on the Blech," episode CABF12, originally broadcast 2/25/01.

³²The image appears on "Ed Chilton's Personal Website" at www.breadlosers.com/personal/p-index.htm+Ed+Chilton&hl=en. Goldberg (147) reports that a similar image adorned the cover of the Autumn 1984 edition of the British literary magazine *Granta*.

³³Doug Marlette, *Tribune Media Services*.

³⁴Brión, *Freelance Star*, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

³⁵See Edwards and Winkler, 301-03.

³⁶Steve Bensen, "Ego Jima," *Arizona Republic*, syndicated in *The Sun*, Bremerton, WA, December 7, 2000, C3.

³⁷*The Simpsons*, "Selma's Choice," episode 9F11, originally broadcast 1/21/93. The literal "consumption" of the flag-raising image has several precedents. Rosenthal reports that it has been sculpted in ice and in hamburger (62). It is molded in vanilla ice cream and doused with hot fudge in a sexually-charged scene in Sy Bartlett's *The Outsiders* (1961), a movie version of the life of Ira Hayes, a native American and one of the three flag raisers to survive the battle of Iwo Jima.

³⁸The Iwo Jima image has been put to work in this context as well on the cover of the February 2002 *Wired*, which shows the iconic image in silhouette with Disney cartoon characters substituted for the soldiers. The caption announces, "Disney, INVADER/Inside the Ultimate Culture Machine." It is employed less cynically on the cover of Lynne Cheney's *America: A Patriotic Primer* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002) where five pre-adolescent boys and girls representing a multi-cultural population are planting the flag in a field of grass and flowers.

³⁹Rick Marin, B1, B8.

⁴⁰Rick Bragg, "U.S. Binds Wound in Red, White, and Blue," *New York Times*, Sept. 17, 2001, A1, A5.

⁴¹*The Record*, September 12, 2001, 1; for alternate versions of the image see *People Weekly*, September 24, 2001, 136, and

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/photos/20010914todaysphoto.jpg> For Franklin's narrative of how the photograph came to be taken, see "Getting the Photo of a Lifetime," *The Record*, September 13, 2001, <http://www.bergenrecord.com/news/tomfoto20010913.htm>.

⁶⁶Jeannine Clegg, "Flag Raising was 'Shot in the Arm,'" *The Record*, September 14, 2001, 1. Also available at <http://www.bergenrecord.com/news/fireflag2001091458.htm>.

⁶⁷See, e.g., Time, "The Rescue Continues" at <http://www.time.com/time/photoessays>; <http://home.earthlink.net/~hankinhsd/thankyou.htm>; and <http://www.mediafishcreative.com/tribute>; *Newsweek*, "Special Report: After The Terror - God Bless America," September 24, 2001; and *Time*, "Special Report: Time For Kids," World Report Edition, Vol. 7, no. 2, September 21, 2001; *Life: The Year in Pictures* (n.p.: Time, 2002); *Encyclopedia Britannica: 2001 Year In Review* (New York, Encyclopedia Britannica, 2002); and *People Weekly*, December 31, 2001-January 7, 2002.

⁶⁸For the New York Firefighters World Trade Center Commemorative Button (proceeds dedicated to the Red Cross) see <http://cgi.ebay.com/aw-cgi/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=1012959098>. The Commemorative Coin was advertised on CNN and in Sunday newspaper magazine supplements such as "American Heroes: Colorized United States Silver Eagle Dollar," *USA Weekend*, October 6-28, 2001, 21. The report on the stained glass window is from the *Ventura County Star*, http://www.insidevc.com/vcs/county_news/article/0,1375,VCS_226_916375,00.html

⁶⁹On building a statue, see Marty Hart, "Park Could Replace Devastation," *The Tucson-Citizen*, September 20, 2001, http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/opinion/9_20_01letters.html. *The Record* website offering to sell the photograph for a donation was at <http://www.northjersey.com/index/groundzerospirit.html>. The photograph that they supply has a full page description of its origination on the back that includes an explicit comparison to the Iwo Jima image. That website has since been replaced by one that details the terms for appropriate usage of the image at www.groundspirit.org.

⁷⁰See http://www.apme.com/2001conf/firefighter_photographer.shtml and <http://www.poynter.org/centerpiece/nppa/photo/AOAFature.htm>.

⁷¹See "New Fundraising Stamp Honors Heroes of September 11 Unveiled at White House," http://www.usps.com/news/2002/philatelic/sr02_017.htm.

⁷²The photo's iconic status may have another visual predecessor, Charles Porter's Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph of a firefighter holding a broken little girl in his arms following the terror bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City (reproduced in Buel, 232-33). The connections with the WTC photo are obvious, and one can think of the new image as a composite of the Iwo Jima and Oklahoma City photos. The firefighter holding the child may have iconic status in its own right, and its presence in the public media could provide an aesthetic disposition to favor the later photo as well. The Oklahoma City photo has been reproduced in some media coverage since September 11, but it has only been paired once with the WTC tragedies in an editorial cartoon by Gary Varvel, *Indianapolis News*, September 30, 2001, <http://cagle.slate.msn.com/politicalcartoons/pccartoons/archives/varvel.asp?Action=GetImage>.

⁷³*People Weekly*, September 24, 2001, 136.

⁷⁴The comment by Russert is reported by Stephen Olbrys in an e-mail message addressed to the authors, September 25, 2001; the theme was picked up and repeated on a number of web forums. See, e.g., the comment by "radiogirl" on September 13, 2001 at <http://www.livejournal.com/talkread.bml?itemid=10614558&nc=3>. The two photographs have been presented side-by-side on numerous websites beginning, we think, at *The Boiling Springs Villager*, cached at www.google.com/search?q=cache:UYuH-QtDReQ:www.bsvillager.com/+iwo+jima+flag+firefighters+&hl=en. The doubled-image also appears as the final image in a belligerent Power Point presentation circulated as an e-mail attachment cast as a memo from the CEO of the Boeing Corporation to Mr. Osama bin Laden.

⁷⁵Reported in Clegg, "Flag Raising was 'Shot in the Arm'." Additionally, the two photographs were reenacted side-by-side during the nationally televised broadcast of the opening ceremony for the 2001 World Series on the Fox Network, October 27, 2001.

⁷⁶Al Guart, "Flag Men: Don't Call Us Heroes," NYPOST.COM, September 29, 2001, <http://www.nypost.com/news/regionalnews/4681.htm>. The two photos are compared in a number of other places as well. See Karal Ann Marling, "Salve for a Wounded People," *New York Times*, October 14, 2001, Arts and Leisure Section 2, 1, 39; and Marianne Fulton, "Memory of A Flag," <http://digitaljournalist.org/issue0110/fulton.htm>.

⁷⁷This spot was broadcast on The History Channel, A&E Television Network, approximately every hour for two weeks beginning on October 8, 2001. It may have had maximum impact during a commercial two-hour documentary rebroadcast of *Heroes of Iwo Jima*.

⁷⁸The nine editorial cartoons are by John Deering, *The Arkansas Democratic Gazette*, Little Rock, Arkansas, September 13, 2001; Robert Arial, *The State*, Columbia, South Carolina, September 12, 2001; Chris Britt, *The State Journal-Register*, Springfield, Illinois, September 14, 2001; Bill Day, *The Commercial Appeal*, Memphis, Tennessee, September 14, 2001; Marshal Ramsay, *The Clarion Ledger*, Jackson, Mississippi, September 14, 2001; Kevin Siers, *The Charlotte Observer*, Charlotte, North Carolina, September 14, 2001; Dana Summers, *The Orlando Sentinel*, Orlando, Florida, September 14, 2001; Gary Brookins, *The Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Richmond, Virginia, September 16, 2001; Ben Sargent, *The Austin-American Statesman*, Austin, Texas, September 18, 2001; and Doug Marlette, Tribune Media Service, September 19, 2001. Each cartoonist maintains a website that archives their cartoons. The group of cartoons listed above are also archived at <http://cagle.slate.msn.com/news/Firefighters/main.asp>.

⁷⁹Examples include the winner of the Huntington Beach annual Xmas Light Display, which includes an image of two firefighters joining two Marines in raising the flag on Iwo Jima, Bryce Alderton, "Sign of the Season and Times," *LA Times*, December 20, 2001, 2:12; the cover of the *Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, October 8-14, 2001; the

Ho Home Page [Indiana University], Vol. 6, no. 3, October 12, 2001, A5; and a newsletter from Indiana State Senator Larry Borst touting his role in passing state anti-terrorism measures. Verbal references were also numerous, including the somewhat forced comparison between the photograph of the flag hanging from the Pentagon with the Two Jima icon. See John Frandsen, "President Bush Targeted," *The Herald-Dispatch*, Huntington, WV, September 13, 2001, <http://www.herald-dispatch.com/2001/September/13/1.Nspot.htm>.

⁸⁰Calls for Generation X to stand up as the next "Greatest Generation" were prolific throughout the media, including editorials, commentaries, letters to the editor, cartoons, and poems. See, e.g., Robert Kagan, "A Declaration of War," *Washington Post On-Line*, September 11, 2001, http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=digest&contentId=A13546_2001Sep11; James Loughrie, "The worst brings out the best in Americans," *The Daily Trojan*, September 12, 2001, 4, 9, <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/dt/V144-N12/01-james.12v.html>; Scott Sears, "It's Now Our Turn," Letter to Editor, September 12, 2001, *The Dallas Morning News*, on-line at http://www.dallasnews.com/editorial/letters/468672_wednesdaylete.html; Julie Ann Ponzi, "Let's Roll!: Generation X Goes to War," September 2001, Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs, <http://www.ashbrook.org/publicat/oped/ponzi/01/genx.html>; David Sumner, "It Seems to Us . . . We Are Not Alone," The National Association of Amateur Radio, October 8, 2001, <http://www.arrl.org/news/features/2001/10/08/27.nc-1>; "Can We Lead? A Challenge to the Children of the Greatest Generation," The Hedgehog Review-Online, <http://www.hedgehog-review.com/NEWS/brokaw.html>; Joan Murray, "The Greatest Generation: A Poem," broadcast on NPR, <http://www.npr.org/news/specials/americantransformed/essays/010919.murray.html>; Suzanne Kahle, "The New Greatest Generation," Letter to Editor, *The Sacramento Bee*, October 8, 2001, at http://www.sacbee.com/voices/news/voices05_20011008.html; and Marshal Ramsay, *The Clarion-Ledger*, Jackson, Mississippi, September 22, 2001, at <http://www.clarionledger.com/news/editorial/ramsey/0109221.gf>. For a cynical view see Margaret Carlson, "Patriotic Splurging," *Time*, October 15, 2001, p. 76.

⁸¹Jason Vaillancourt, posting to a Union College Class of 1995 bulletin board, at <http://www.union.edu/Alumni-Archive/WTC/display.php?yr=1995>.

⁸²See Robb Armstrong's *Jump Start*, October 12, 2001, <http://www.unitedmedia.com/comics/jumpstart/archive-jumpstart-20011012.html>.

⁸³See the cartoons by Robert Arial and Ben Sargant.

⁸⁴See Stephanie Gaskill, "Flag-Raising Statue Draws Criticism," Associated Press, January 11, 2002, at http://dailynews.yahoo.com/h/ap/20020111/us/attacks_statue_2.html; and Rod Dreher, "The Bravest Speak," *National Review*, January 16, 2002 at www.nationalreview.com/dreher/dreher011602.shtml.

⁸⁵The appeal to "consumerism" was a steady and growing element of the Bush administration during the weeks following the attack on the WTC and the Pentagon. See, e.g., George W. Bush, "Address to the Joint Session of Congress and the American People," September 20, 2001; "Radio Address of the President to the Nation," September 22, 2001; "Remarks of the President to the Dixie Printing CO., Glen Burrow, MD," October 24, 2001; and "Remarks by the President to Business, Trade and Agriculture Leaders," October 26, 2001. All are available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/>.

⁸⁶Mike Luckovich, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, October 5, 2001, at <http://cagle.slate.msn.com/news/SHOP-terror/main.asp>.

⁸⁷Mike Keefe, *The Denver Post*, October 04, 2001. Posted at both <http://www.intoon.com/archive.php?index=1&searchdate=2001-10> and <http://cagle.slate.msn.com/news/SHOP-terror/main.asp>.

⁸⁸For another use of visual allusions to activate the generational comparison, see the cartoon titled "Civilian Consumption Corps" by R.J. Matson that employs World War II recruitment poster conventions to depict a uniformed woman at a shopping mall doing her national duty—shopping. *Roll Call*, October 8, 2001 at http://www.rjmatson.com/frames_R.htm. Print editorials that indicated a similar cynicism include Carlson, "Patriotic Splurging," and Michael Kinslev, "My Agenda For Victory," *Washington Post*, October 16, 2001, A23.

Received November 12, 2001

Final revision received April 5, 2002

Accepted July 29, 2002