

“The Falling Man” as Viewed in the Lens of the “Public Sphere”

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### Description of “The Falling Man”

9/11 has come to be known as “the most photographed and video graphed day in history (*9/11: The Falling Man*).” Photographs ranged from smoky spectacles of rubble to bloody, burned bodies draped upon the shoulders of firemen. Among all the photos taken that day, some photos stood apart in a category that truly represents the awfulness of the day—the photos of people falling from the upper floors of the towers, plummeting to their deaths.

“The Falling Man” photograph<sup>1</sup>, in particular, shows a man falling upside down perpendicular to the ground. It ran on September 12, 2001, sparking national controversy. In the days following September 11, grieving Americans bounced back from the terrorism. They chose to focus on “pictures of the rescuers...something the nation could celebrate and rally around (*9/11: The Falling Man*).”

“The Falling Man” is a photograph taken by acclaimed photographer at the *Associated Press*, Richard Drew. The *Associated Press* has employed Richard Drew for more than 31 years (Howe). On September 11, 2001, Drew had been covering a pregnant model show at Bryant Park in New York City when he was called and directed by his managers at the *Associated Press* to head to the Twin Towers. Drew took the train to Chambers Street—the stop before the World Trade Center (Howe). He snapped only a few frames, due to the authorities’ attempt to clear the area. He did not know it at the time, but he had managed to capture a photograph that would pack an emotional punch on billions of viewers.

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<sup>1</sup> The photograph can be found on various websites including [huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com) and [suntimes.com](http://suntimes.com).

The “Falling Man” image is symmetrical and pristine, characterized by straight vertical lines and simple black, white and grey hues. The photograph’s background shows the vertical industrial building material (probably steel, glass, and concrete) of the sister towers (Fitzpatrick 88). The light of the day shone on the towers creating the appearance of reflected stripes or perhaps vertical mirrors.

When looking at the subject in the photograph, we see a man falling— headfirst. He is situated in the center of the frame and looks to be Hispanic or African American. Despite the horrific action of the subject in the photograph, he appears perfectly postured—almost puppet-like. His head, neck, and foot are in near perfect alignment. The man is centered in the frame at the exact line where the two towers meet visually, and the symmetry looks to me like wings of a butterfly or perhaps an angel. Scholar, Anne Fitzpatrick, compares the symmetry in the photo to “the spine of a book (Fitzpatrick 88).” Interestingly, he does not look scared, or struggling—but peacefully being. Upon closer inspection, you can trace the man’s facial profile, clothing, and body type. His clothes are still fastened to his body, unlike thousands of other photographs of the two hundred people falling from the towers that day.

### **Commentary/Public Response/ Importance**

Communication scholars deem Drew’s photograph significant because it will help people further understand why Americans reacted so unfavorably, and what that suggests about contemporary society. Many Americans did not want “The Falling Man” photograph published again, and consequently, newspapers never ran it after September 12, 2001. Even Drew felt puzzled about the controversy the photo created: “People

jumped from the building...” he said, “You can write about it but you can’t show a picture of it (Artusa 47).” Several newspapers did “show a picture of it,” and their decision deemed immoral. One such newspaper criticized for publishing the photograph was *The Morning Call*.

The *Morning Call* newspaper is an everyday run-of-the-mill American newspaper based in Allentown, Pennsylvania. This newspaper is significant because it was one of the first newspapers to run “The Falling Man” photo and notably, the largest frame of the photo, compared to any other newspaper (it was stretched out on the back page of the press). The news team at the *Morning Call* made the decision to run it after much deliberation (*9/11: The Falling Man*). David Erdman, managing editor of the *Morning Call* made his decision to run the photograph based on its special storytelling quality: “They’re hard to look at but there are certain photos that just tell the story. In this case, it got to the humanity that other photos even more graphic might not (*9/11: The Falling Man*).” The photograph injects a surge of emotion into the viewer, causing a whirlwind of questions concerning morality and identification.

Typically, when we think of controversial photos, we remember gory photos of war and of lives lost. The subject of “The Falling Man” was also about to die, and yet something about this photo radiated “poise and grace (*9/11: The Falling Man*).” This poise and grace offers an irony that causes the public to react in a passionate way. *Morning Call* Business Editor, Michael Hirsch, said he felt like he “was punched in the stomach, you know it was such a strong image...just the last moment of the person’s life (*9/11: The Falling Man*).” Hirsch is more than likely not the only one to feel this kind of reaction to the temporarily widespread image.

The photograph ran in 170,000 copies of the *Morning Call* on September 12, 2001, enraging readers (*9/11: The Falling Man*). After September 12, 2001, “The Falling Man” was never printed in the press again. One writer employed at a popular blog website explains the newspaper reaction to the audience’s hostile response:

From the *Times* to the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, dailies pulled the image and were forced to go on the immediate defensive as they wiped the image from their online records...mostly the image hasn’t been seen in print since 2001. Drew has called it ‘The most famous photograph no one has seen (Anderson).’

Tom Junod, *Esquire* magazine journalist, and writer of news article entitled “The Falling Man” said: “In the most photographed and videotaped day in the history of the world, the images of people “jumping” were the only images that became, by consensus, taboo—the only images from which Americans were proud to avert their eyes (Faulkner 67).” The taboo quality of “The Falling Man” is what initially provoked me to conduct this research. After analyzing the photograph’s context, functions and effects of “The Falling Man” throughout this paper, I will return to this taboo quality in a later section.

Identification plays a vital role in the photograph. The audience for “The Falling Man” is the American people. After the photo was first published in the aforementioned newspapers, people were heated, claiming the photograph is “invading the privacy of the identity of man (Artusa 47),” or that “the photo is sensationally exploiting his certain death (Artusa 47).” In response, Drew said: “I didn't capture this person's death. I captured part of his life. This is what he decided to do, and I think I preserved that

(Artusa 47).” Here we are alluding to agency and the concept of “innocence,” which I will discuss in more depth later in this paper.

Despite the editors’ reasoning and rationale, the desperateness of the man in the photo is not something most Americans like to see. “The Falling Man” will be the guiding mediation for which the paper builds. The emotional reaction of the public sphere includes issues pertaining to identification, public morality and censorship. Accordingly, Drew’s photograph reveals a quality by which viewers are influenced emotionally and psychologically. This paper attempts to account for the photograph’s rhetorical power: why it is and seemingly remains to be so controversial, and the many different effects it has made on public culture. I will explore a range of functions and effects from rhetorical study including that from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to visual rhetoric, to the photograph’s impact in the photojournalistic and censored world.

## **Introduction**

Historically, the use of sentiment in rhetorical discourse has been used in different ways. Several rhetorical scholars have done research and developed personal attitudes toward sentimental oratory. Moreover, scholars who analyze the sentimental style in oratory have disagreeing viewpoints concerning the operating morality within the function and effect of that discourse. Initial studies concerning the “sentimental style” include the viewpoints of Richard Weaver and Edwin Black. It is interesting how Weaver’s conservative leaning opposes Edwin Black’s liberal leaning at such an extent, and *vice versa*, yet both studies make sound arguments. In an effort to address the use of sentiment and how it influences, it will be useful to acknowledge and interject the academic works of Richard Weaver and Edwin Black. I will first briefly explain the

interesting dichotomy of Weaver and Black. After I provide a background for both Black's viewpoints and Weaver's viewpoints, I will utilize the conflicting sides by placing Weaver and Black on varying sides of a kind of "spectrum." I will then use this "spectrum" as a tool for the discussion of "The Falling Man" and its associated issues.

The intended discussion involves an array of principles that jar my thought process. Both Weaver and Black developed meaningful principles to study rhetoric using a form of sentimental quality. By integrating Weaver and Black into my paper, I will look at how their principles may be applied to contemporary rhetoric. Weaver and Black both employ their views regarding verbal rhetoric. A large and unique part of contemporary rhetoric includes technological advances society has undergone since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Photojournalism has been increasingly important since the event of the first 35 mm camera invented in Germany in 1925 (Collins). Mr. Frank Luther Mott first coined the term photojournalism. After World War II, photojournalism erupted in the United States, appropriately. Henry Luce, American creator of *Time* and *Fortune* magazines, launched *Life*, in 1936—a new magazine relying on modern photojournalism (Collins).

Since its development, photojournalism has influenced the public sphere in ways never thought possible. The shift from verbal to visual rhetoric, or perhaps verbal-visual rhetoric, as the name photojournalism implies, is a contemporary concept. Rhetoricians John Louis Lucaites and Robert Hariman have recognized the rising attention given to visual rhetoric, drawing from iconic photographs including "Accidental Napalm," "Migrant Mother," and "The Flag Raising at Iwo Jima." In my discussion I will extract Lucaites and Hariman's analysis of public morality, civic identity, and collective memory. By drawing on the contemporary work of the latter rhetoricians, I can look at "The



Falling Man” through a more modern lens.

Another source I found to analyze “The Falling Man” photograph specifically, and discuss how it functions within her concept of “innocence” of individuals is by Dr. Joanne Faulkner, Research Fellow and Professor at University of New South Wales, Australia. Faulkner has studied Nietzsche extensively. Her research investigates the significance in the innocence of being (“Dr. Joanne Faulkner”), which deals with agency regarding the subject in the photograph. Faulkner’s article deals a great bit with the actual event of September 11, 2001 and the psychology of the subject of the photo. This is not quite my focus here, but I will still reflect on her analysis regarding “The Falling Man” as a photojournalistic piece.

In my paper, I will critique visual rhetoric within the realm of photojournalism. I will acknowledge research dealing with the photograph at hand, and its relevant issues. The discussion I hope to create will pull from scholarly work within opposing parameters—Weaver and Black, and appropriately incorporate principles concerning contemporary visual rhetoric using Lucaites and Hariman, Faulkner, along with other communication scholars.

Utilizing the aforementioned research as my guide, I will organize this paper as follows. First, I will build an understanding of the verbal to visual shift in the media. Then, I will explore the functions and effects of public morality, and civic identity among the public sphere. Later, I will address consciousness, “innocence,” and ultimately, censorship, in regard to “The Falling Man.”

**Edwin Black and Richard Weaver: Opposing Viewpoints**

In the case of public oratory, the idea of direct sentiment is controversial because of the way an orator can influence the audience. The way the orator would do this in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is particularly exemplary in the speeches of Daniel Webster—whose speech I will briefly excerpt, so you have an idea of what is meant by Webster’s use of what has been called the “sentimental style.” This speech, delivered in 1825, is honoring the anniversary of The Battle of Bunker Hill:

But the scene amidst which we stand does not permit us to confine our thoughts or our sympathies to those fearless spirits who hazarded or lost their lives on this consecrated spot. We have the happiness to rejoice here in the presence of the most worthy representation of the survivors of the whole Revolutionary army. –Daniel Webster, 1825 (Black 101)

Edwin Black and Richard Weaver both use Daniel Webster as an exemplary orator of what has come to be known as the “sentimental style.” It is particularly interesting how each researcher has a very different view on the same pieces of work. The interjection of the dichotomy of Black and Weaver will add an interesting component to this paper. It will allow me to examine and discuss “The Falling Man” photograph in a way that is not one-sided or partial to a specific political viewpoint.

With that said, I will address Edwin Black and his liberal leaning first, and then follow with Richard Weaver’s conservative leaning. Please refer to the Webster passage to understand the language of using sentiment to persuade. Although the two researchers’

views contradict one another, I think by examining both, I can conclude with a well-educated understanding in the end.

### ***Edwin Black***

Edwin Black explains how the effectiveness of using sentiment as a form of influence depends on the environment and political time/setting. Black defends utilizing some kind of sentimentalism in the context of war remembrance in order to arouse emotion in the audiences (as Webster did). The occasion of war lends itself to a strongly emotional response by the audience (Black 102). Further, he explains the orator “also defines and delimits (Black 102)” the reaction by the audience, meaning the orator has premeditatedly figured out the feeling the audience will feel. He leaves no room for an audience member to utilize free thought (Black 102).

With that said, Black contends auditors of this style are quite vulnerable, and upon reaching a certain threshold, are at high risk of losing his own utility to think for oneself. To lose the ability to think for oneself, or lose control of consciousness is a primary characteristic of using sentiment to influence (Black 104). Black deems the “sentimental style” as evasive— so evasive, that “the style, in effect, issues a series of imperative regulations of sentiment (Black 104).” It regulates the audience members’ emotions to such high degree of control, that it causes a rehearsal of the auditor’s opinion to the point where they believe it to be true (Black 104).

In addition to his claims regarding the consciousness of the audience, Black understands the “sentimental style” as “a style that compensates for a deficiency of confidence in the appropriate relations between attitudes and conditions (Black 111).”

Black would agree the orator lacks in confidence in what he is saying, and uses illustrative language to such an extent, by which the audience falls victim to its eloquence, and ultimately gives in to believe what the orator is conveying. Ultimately, Black argues that by use of sentiment in public oratory, the orator effectively manipulates, and is powerful to the point that it can, and has in the past; render an audience collectively lacking access to their own conscious (Black 111).

### ***Richard Weaver***

Weaver's thoughts regarding manipulating sentiment begin with what he calls the "uncontested term." The uncontested term is defined as "a term which seems to invite contest, but which apparently is not so regarded in its own context (Weaver 166)." These terms are generalizations, and today if we look back on them, it is hard to understand what the speaker was thinking when he/she used these terms. Weaver argues the uncontested term has the allusion of allowing the public sphere to be capable of questioning what the speaker states (Weaver 166).

Weaver explains the old orator as one who uses "sweeping generality." This orator knew something of his audience's mind and was confident of his effect (Weaver 166)." This means the orator effectively researched his audience in order to generalize to the best of his ability in hopes of influencing the most audience members. Weaver gained likeness in this strategy. Some may call it smart, while others, such as Black, may call it deceitful and ethically wrong. Regardless, these "sweeping generalities" had an effect in 19<sup>th</sup> century oratory.

In response, audience members elevated the speaker, calling him a “great man (Weaver 166).” To cross-reference, Black would argue it actually keeps audience members from utilizing their own morality. Weaver believes in a spaciousness that “has resonances, both historical and literary (169),” which connects himself with his audience, in a kind of rapport building.

While in more contemporary oratory and multimedia, spaciousness does not work in the way Webster used it, I would argue resonances, as described by Weaver as “not a single note” but an “echo over broad areas and to call up generalized association (Weaver 169)” rings true for the reaction by the public sphere of “The Falling Man (Weaver 169).” This is useful to our analysis of “The Falling Man,” because it allows us further understanding of the public sphere. “Levels of generality do not contradict one another; they supplement one another by bringing out different foci of interest (Weaver 167).” The generality used in media is exactly what Black would deem manipulative, a kind of fogging up the glasses with tidbits of what the orator wants the audience to believe.

While Black and Weaver have different perspectives on sentimentalism, both could agree that the public sphere plays a role. According to Weaver, “All we know is that whatever spells the essential unity of a people in belief and attachment contains the answer (Weaver 167).” This quotation is applicable to the “Falling Man” because it offers palpable appreciation of the power and perplexity of the public sphere itself.

He argues, “The best we can do...is look into the mechanism of relationship between this level of generality, and the effectiveness (Weaver 167),” in the case of “The Falling Man,” the media. Weaver suggests the orator enjoyed the privilege of building upon what was built yesterday, and states, “He who wishes to start everyday ‘new,’

denies reality of progress (170 Weaver).” This idea leans oppositional to Black’s liberal leaning, however, many of both Black and Weaver’s ideas make sense in the context of “The Falling Man” photo, which I am eager to report, as it concerns the puzzling nature of the public sphere.

### **Shift from Verbal to Visual Rhetoric**

Over the course of history, public debate has shifted from verbal, or written reportage to visual imagery, photojournalism, or a culmination of verbal with visual news platforms (Hariman and Lucaites, “Public Identity” 36). With the invention of the modern mass press, reproduction of a printed image is now faster and easier to produce than ever before. Photographs printed in popular press journals, newspapers, magazines etc. continue to influence, and effect readers. “Photos inspire the reader, generate emotions, condense information and encourage further reading and information seeking (Rossler).” Photographs act as alternatives or supplements to written words. The very understanding that readers are inspired, encouraged, and/or motivated by photographs is very powerful.

Edwin Black claims the sentimental style has changed with the verbal to visual shift of reportage. Black argues the style has “fallen into disfavor and when we do encounter it...it seems archaic and contrived (110 Black).” I would agree 19<sup>th</sup> century speeches using the sentimental style have clearly fallen into disfavor. In his work, Black asks the question: ‘What has happened to the style?’ I would apply the style’s effects and functions to the visual culture and argue it produces its own implications, which are contextualized in today’s world of television, Internet, and Smart Phones.

I do agree with Black, in that, if a speaker attempted Webster's style (clusters of flowery words and mixed metaphors), this orator would not be successful. However, with the use of photojournalism, and its way of staring the viewer in the face, the public sphere has no choice but to perform a reaction to it in some way (Weaver 167).

In addition to the actual press coverage shift, there is, "a growing scholarly attention to visual culture (Hariman and Lucaites "Public Identity" 35)" which may lead for further implication, functions and effects of mass media within the realm of visual rhetoric.

### *Aesthetic Distance*

An important concept to address in terms of "The Falling Man" is aesthetic distance. Richard Weaver acknowledges that there is an aesthetic distance present in photography: "There is an aesthetic, as well as a moral, limit to how close one may approach an object; and the forensic artists of the epoch we describe seem to have been guided by this principle of artistic decorum." In context of "The Falling Man," the "forensic artists" of our time are the photographer, photojournalists, editors etc. The decisions these workers make create a moral response in the viewers. In the case of "The Falling Man," viewers question the moral and aesthetic limit because of the photograph's sheer horror.

Furthermore, Weaver discusses closeness in regard to the aesthetic and moral understanding of a photograph. When one views "The Falling Man" photograph, it is from the appropriate distance. Weaver says:

If one sees an object from too close, one sees only its irregularities and proturbences. To see an object rightly or to see it as a whole, one has to have a proportioned distance from it. Then the parts fall into a meaningful pattern, the dominant effect emerges, and one sees it “as it really is (Weaver 175).”

The viewer sees the subject’s body centered. His face is a dark silhouette, by which one could trace his nose and lips. If the photograph that ran in the magazine had been zoomed in on the face, and brightened perhaps, viewers would identify with the photograph at a much greater extent. At the same time, if the subject in the photograph hadn’t had a precise, traceable facial silhouette, if there had been more distance from the subject, it may have been less scrutinized. Weaver sees the image as a metaphor. Seeing the image “as it really is,” is after all, the objective goal of showing people a photograph of an event. In today’s society, we are shown images that create a “dominant effect” among viewers. Dominant effects are perpetuated by the media culture in which we live.

### ***Television Culture***

As earlier addressed, Black asks the question of, ‘What happened to the sentimental style?’ Further in his analysis, he claims, “We must look to television for part of the answer (Black 110).” Black describes how sentimentalism has seeped into the televisual culture (110). Along with Black’s discussion of the “sentimental style,” a concept of sensationalism is embedded in the televisual world, in virtually every facet. Black argues, “In its reports and documentaries no less than its soap operas and adventure



stories, television subordinates its raw material to the demands of dramatic form (110).” Unlike the sentimental style, television does not try to hide us from evils, but rather calls for viewers to embrace its poignancy (Black 110). Although this is true, we must take a different look at the use of television, one that concerns the effects on the auditor—moral judgment.

As television has become an outlet for news dispersal, viewers are now presented with issues of morality and social guilt. Veering away from moral judgment is a choice people are making, in conjunction with focusing on the aesthetic qualities of the image, television program, documentary etc.

This means television conveys horrors via the fiction, by which, “Viewers are invited to live lives of unremitting social guilt (Black 110).” Interestingly though, although television viewers encounter such horrifying programs, “...television orders, edits, and comments on its photography with strict attention to the dramaturgic expectations of its audience (Black 110).” The editors will capitalize on the horror, as they know people will be drawn to it for one reason or the other, and render it acceptable television viewing by audiences. “Thus, television reportage works, as the “sentimental style” did, to render public issues aesthetically appealing (Black 110).” Although it seems perverse to look at “The Falling Man” photograph in terms of its aesthetic appeal, one may look to television and video games as a means by which Americans become desensitized to horrific images and narratives.

## The Public Sphere

This part of the discussion involves defining and opening the contents and qualities of the public sphere. If we look at how the audiences of “The Falling Man” photograph operate in response to events of similar terror as 9/11, we can gain a further understanding on the photograph’s effects and functions. I will now describe three characteristics of the public sphere, which will contribute to a better understanding of the concept. At the conclusion of this section, I have included a sub-section that describes Hariman and Lucaites’ “stranger relationality” concept, which runs parallel to the characteristics of the public sphere I will now discuss.

First, we must recognize the public sphere is made up of comprehensive group of strangers. World-renowned German philosopher, Jürgen Habermas has conducted extensive research regarding the public sphere, influencing the fields of philosophy, communication studies, and psychology, among others. According to Habermas, “No one part of the public sphere can lead an entire public sphere to fall apart (Hariman and Lucaites, “Public Identity” 36).” Habermas’ studies on the public sphere are of particular interest to me because I believe by acknowledging the public sphere at work in regard to viewer response; we can gain significant insight about that response. When members of the public sphere join together and view a photo, they are connected. Interest, norms, self-awareness, and political activity allow for strangers to connect, broadly, as members of one entity. Habermas claims, if specific “groups of the public sphere could be excluded... it is not a public sphere at all (Hariman and Lucaites, “Public Identity” 36).” This begs the question, what is *not* the public sphere? Private groups or organizations one

may belong to such as religious, interest, or familial groups are not considered the public sphere.

Secondly, the public sphere may be ignorant to a certain extent (i.e. heard of sheep), yet it is important to recognize members are attuned to sense attitudes and feel emotions. Weaver explains how humans, when part of the “masses,” are typically “ignorant and ill-trained.” He says: “It should not be overlooked that although the masses in any society are comparatively ill-trained and ignorant, they *are* very quick to sense attitudes, through their native capacity as human beings (Weaver 183).” If one adopts the idea that members of society are quick to pick up on the thoughts and feelings in fellow members, the masses may prove to be less ignorant than is expected.

Thirdly, the public sphere acts as a whole, including people of various economic, political, racial, sexual, cultural, and geographical backgrounds. Weaver explores how the public sphere becomes an equal consumer of the item one is viewer, despite whether the member is of the elite or of the general public. Weaver acknowledges the way in which broadly reflective discourse functions among people from all walks of life, that is, there is no more inclination for an average American to view an image in widespread circulation, than the President of the United States. Weaver states:

When attitudes change at the top of society, they (the masses) are able to see that change long before they are able to describe it in any language of their own, and in fact they can see it without ever doing that. The masses thus follow intellectual styles, and more quickly than is often supposed, so that, in this particular case, when a general skepticism of prediction sets in

among leaders of thought, the lower ranks are soon infected with the same thing... This principle will explain why there is no more appetite for the broadly reflective discourse among the general public of today than among the elite (183 Weaver).

I argue there is a remarkable unprejudiced quality attached to the concept of the public sphere. The public sphere has a special relationship with public identity, in that members connect and learn from the actions, reactions, and general performances of fellow members. In my argument, members, in a sense, are merely members of the public sphere, just as any other member of the public sphere.

### ***Hariman and Lucaites' "Stranger Relationality"***

While I have briefly mentioned it in this paper already, I will now discuss a concept known as "stranger relationality." According to Lucaites and Hariman, "stranger relationality," is a concept that effectually "...addresses people who are identified primarily through their participation in discourse and who therefore cannot be known in advance ("Public Identity" 36)." As we already discovered, the public sphere is made up of strangers. One does not need to follow norms when interacting in the way they must with friend groups and family. The idea behind the Habermasian public sphere represents a culture in which public use of reason, openness to discussing topics, and general self-disclosure occurs ("Public Identity" 36). I would argue "The Falling Man" photograph is a widely disseminated photograph, even if only temporarily. Hariman and Lucaites claim:

The widely disseminated visual image provides the public audience with a sense of shared experience that anchors the necessarily impersonally character of public discourse in the motivational ground of social life (Hariman and Lucaites “Performing Civic” 365).

This means iconic photographs, or other far-reaching news stories embed a form of community among the public sphere. If such “widely disseminated” images, such as “The Falling Man,” continue to bring strangers together in some way, these photojournalistic pieces will continue to influence, and provide a large audience for such pieces.

### **Faulkner’s “Innocence”**

Helplessness is something many Americans can identify with when viewing “The Falling Man.” Joanne Faulkner discusses her viewpoint and argument regarding helplessness of the victim through a concept she calls “innocence.” She calls for the public to perceive the subject of “The Falling Man” by “emphasizing agency and creativity above victimhood” when viewing the photograph. I seek to offer insight regarding Faulkner’s research by briefly discussing what she means by “innocence,” so that when I refer to this concept later in the paper, you will have an understanding.

First, Faulkner acknowledges the subject in the photo may be “conceived as passive and guiltless.” The perception that the “The Falling Man” is viewed as helpless on *all* accounts opposes her belief. She hopes the public can gain a perspective that the victims actually contribute to an understanding of, “determination of life (Faulkner 82),”

as opposed to “being a mere passive object of external causes—disempowered and separated from agency.” While this concept seems complex, Faulkner essentially hopes for the public to view the subject of “The Falling Man” not as passive but as a person who is capable of making decisions, whether the choice is between burning to death or falling to death, these individuals made a decision for themselves.

As a second point regarding the innocent, Faulkner believes the subject of the photo, by which viewers identify, has “innocence” in the case of “The Falling Man.” As a transition into public morality, “The Falling Man” functions as a basis for discussion by the public sphere, which creates a collective moral concern. This collective moral concern causes a kind of civic identity. Faulkner contends, “The innocent is the moral concern of others: as a potential victim...as the passive recipient of moral solicitude, the innocent is the turf upon which moral contests are waged (Faulkner 74).” Thus, the “The Falling Man,” provides a means for public dialogue.

### **Identification**

Visual rhetoric has an effect on members of the public sphere due to the role of civic identity (Hariman and Lucaites “Public Identity” 35). First, I will briefly contextualize identification by sharing brief commentary. Then, I will explore two means of identification relating to 9/11 and “The Falling Man”. The first being identification among members in the public sphere and the second being the civic identification of the members toward the subject in “The Falling Man” photograph.

Richard Drew thinks Americans were upset because the photograph made it easy for them to see themselves in the situation (Green). “The Falling Man Photo is

something everyone can identify with. I think it is hard for people to look at it because they can identify too much,' says Drew (Green).” This statement I agree with and believe people may identify to such extent they choose to not look at it.

### *Identifying with fellow members in the Public Sphere*

To begin this section, I would like to reiterate a quote used previously by Weaver. “All we know is that whatever spells the essential unity of a people in belief and attachment contains the answer. The best we can do...is look into the mechanism of relationship between this level of generality, and the effectiveness...(Weaver 167)” of the media. By seeking how strangers are brought together through civic identity, we are asking the question as to how these people are brought together under the circumstances of 9/11, and the associated media that has been continually reported out since then.

These visual images in question are useful for acknowledging “stranger relationality,” which occurs alongside public address norms. Although supplemental to the news, photojournalism “defines the public through an act of common spectatorship (Hariman and Lucaites “Public Identity” 36).” Faulkner agrees with this idea, contending the iconic images and photojournalism stories become, “...a narrative about national character and identity, hope, fear, and desire (Faulkner 67).” Because “The Falling Man” is a photograph, there are inevitably narratives attributed to it. It is interesting to think about the narratives attached to “The Falling Man.” These narratives range from fear to hope. Faulkner explores the idea of an image being an illustration for the narrative a viewer chooses:

The images drawn on to illustrate this narrative were therefore of critical importance; what was needed was a strong and coherent picture of “innocence”: the “innocence” of those killed in the attacks, to be sure, but also of the American people more generally—who, after a brief period of tending to their wounds, would need to collect themselves and return to the everyday commerce of existence, secure in the belief that evil is radically external to their “way of life” and that their government will ultimately protect them (Faulkner 67).

In the context of Faulkner’s “innocence,” she claims the “American people in general” will need to take the time to recover from the emotional distraught endured from the image, as it causes the viewer to identify with the subject of the photograph and his unfortunate circumstance. 9/11 stirred up a welter of confusion, incomprehensibility, and above all, shattered hearts for those who perished, or had loved ones who perished. The photograph situates in a certain narrative of loss, hope, fear etc. Depending on one’s specific identification with the image, one thing does ring true. All of these people needed to adjust back to normalcy. There is community and a sense of civic identity in that.

Lucaites and Hariman go so far to claim,

Because the public is a discursively organized body of strangers constituted solely by the acts of being addressed and paid attention, it can only acquire self-awareness and historical agency if individual auditors ‘see themselves’



in collective representations that are the materials of public culture  
(Hariman and Lucaites “Public Identity” 36).

The way Lucaites and Hariman suggest, “individual auditors” as wanting to see themselves within the public culture, I would contend people like to be acknowledged even in the slightest degree, as part of perhaps an affirmation for their response. In a separate context, I can think of the example of a child at the first day of school, not quite knowing what to do. The child looks around the body of strangers, and effectually seeks to “see oneself” as okay to be doing what they are doing. Their decision is ultimately made based on what the other members are doing.

***Identifying with the subject of “The Falling Man”***

A second means of identification among the public sphere is perhaps even stronger than the latter. According to Hariman and Lucaites, identifying with the subject in “The Falling Man” “activates the terror of tragedy, which comes from realization that humans can be abandoned to a world that no longer is capable of sympathy, a world of beasts and gods, of destructive powers and impersonal forces of pain with out end (particularly in second plane crash) (Hariman and Lucaites “Public Identity” 43).” By identifying with the subject of the photo, fear is the primary emotion attributable. With that said, this photograph effectually horrifies and sends the viewer into a whirl of terror, anxiety and panic for the subject.

Weaver contends, “Perhaps the source of our discomfort comes to us an admonition that there were giants in the earth before us, mighty men, men of renown. But

before we are ready for any conclusion, we must isolate the cause of our intimidation (Weaver 166).” This quotation offers a small window of hope from the viewer. It lends itself to a religious belief of some kind. People, perhaps, choose to react in a way that can be controlled based on a certain religious or spiritual belief. Religion and spirituality, therefore, (among those who do practice such faiths) can prove, I contend, to be very powerful in the determining a viewer’s response to the photograph at hand.

### **Iconic Photograph**

The collective human behaviors discussed throughout this paper regarding members of the public sphere and their subsequent civic identity, memory, morality etc. are effects of what are known as iconic photographs. Lucaites and Hariman have reached a comprehensive definition to assist with understanding what has been called the iconic photograph:

A photographic image 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 (“Performing Civic” 365-6).

It is important to understand “The Falling Man” follows these definable criteria, and thereby is an iconic photograph. The photograph is widely recognized, and surely represents the awfulness of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. As we well know, it activated a strong response by viewers.

Thus far, I have explored several ways the widely disseminated image provides the collective masses with a sense of shared experience. The iconic photograph has power that can bring you back to the event just by viewing it. With an understanding of what an iconic photograph is it is now time to look beyond our initial grapple, as we now seek to explore public morality—a discussion that many times grows from an iconic photograph.

### **Public Morality**

First, I would like to point out a few other iconic photographs that along with “The Falling Man,” will allow for public morality conversation. Iconic photographs placed in the same category as “The Falling Man,” include “Migrant Mother” taken during The Great Depression, and “Accidental Napalm” taken at the Vietnam War. The subjects in both photographs call for readers to evaluate the image. These three examples of iconic photographs “function as a powerful emotional resource for discussing public morality (Hariman and Lucaites “Public Identity” 35).” Hariman and Lucaites’ phrase, “a powerful emotional resource” strikes a chord with me. I think it is good insight because it designates a particular significant function of the iconic photograph. The iconic photograph is not something one merely views, and then turns the page. When a viewer glances across “The Falling Man,” he/she feels an urge to evaluate what is happening in the photo. “Evaluativity,” as defined by scholar at UC Santa Cruz, Kevin Reschke, is “a rough measure of a person’s implied feelings or judgments toward some topic of conversation (Reschke).” I contend the iconic photograph prompts “evaluativity” from its viewer, upon which a discussion of public morality will follow.

Next, I need to point out the fact that public morality needs to be constructed based on the situation. In the case of “The Falling Man,” the occasion was the horrific day of 9/11. In addition to the day itself, it is important to consider the nation’s political, social and economic issues occurring at the time. In the following quote, we find the viewers’ moral response stems from the overall state of the nation. Hariman and Luciates describe their point,

A logic of public moral response has to be constructed, it has to be one that is adapted to the deep problems in public culture at the time, and it has to be consistent with its strengths and weaknesses of the medium of articulation (Hariman and Luciates “Public Identity” 35).

In taking a look at the strengths and weaknesses of 9/11, it is important we look at the surrounding culture. The public sphere in New York City on September 11, 2001, is a melting pot of different cultures, and American citizens. Luciates and Hariman define liberal-democratic citizenship as “loosely enforced,” “relatively abstract” and, therefore, “a questionable basis for collective action (“Performing Civic” 367).”

What I find interesting in looking at various iconic photographs is how each iconic photograph is set in a different culture. Take for instance, The Vietnam War. The sharp contrast of observable contexts of the Vietnam War versus the War on Terror is very different. This is why it is important to look fully at each photo, with a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses behind the unique context of each photograph.

Given we need to take context and the constructed morality within a given culture into consideration, let us look at 9/11 specifically. Iconic photographs are “capable of activating public conscious at the time because it provides an embodied transcription of important features of moral life, including...pain, trauma, and stranger relations (Hariman and Lucaites “Public Identity” 40).” These features of moral life are strengthened by photographic representation. Hariman and Lucaites claim:

These features correspond with one another, and moreover, demonstrate in a single image how photojournalism can do important work within public discourse, work that may not be done as well in verbal texts adhering to the norms of discursive rationality (Hariman and Lucaites “Public Identity” 40).

Lucaites and Hariman point out once again<sup>0</sup> the verbal to visual shift, and how members of the public sphere have a more emotional public moral response to visual over verbal reportage.

According to Weaver, some news stories influence public morality through determining whether an influential medium deserves proper deliberation or not. Weaver discusses his sentimental view, explaining “some things were fixed by universal enlightened consensus,” which, “were used as steps for getting at matters which were less settled and hence proper subjects for deliberation (170).” I would say, in agreement with Weaver that the context of the occasion, the public constructs, or the “things we know,” and subsequently, “presume(s) everyone to know in the same way (169)” provides us

with understanding about how to evaluate “The Falling Man.” The basis of which a discussion on public morality occurs, involves understanding the context of which the photograph was taken.

***“What would I have done in that situation?”***

After acknowledging some of the precepts regarding public morality, I’d like to take a deep look at a moral question the public has asked themselves after viewing “The Falling Man.” This question is seemingly quite impossible to empathize with, which makes it an increasingly difficult question of morality. Members of the public sphere asked, “What would I have done?”

When viewing “The Falling Man,” members of the public evoke a looming sense of pity and terror upon the subject (Hariman and Lucaites “Public Identity” 35). The representation of a decision is perpetuated in the minds of the viewer (Faulkner 68). Faulkner creates a discussion in which she refers to Nietzsche’s critique on morality: “Application of innocence to a group serves to erode their political agency (Faulkner 68),” which if applied to the “Falling Man,” would be leaning toward Black’s idea that when the whole public sphere begins to think in one way, it creates a lack to think for oneself when part of the public sphere.

With the question of the aforementioned decision in mind, Faulkner remarks, “Yet, elsewhere he frames this reluctance to consider the image precisely in terms of a veiled recognition that those who jumped had rationally decided to do so (Faulkner 71).” Figuring the “jumpers” may have acted on choice, I think comforts viewers. Junod further explains:

‘The people who died inside the building—there was a fatalism to it: there was nothing that they could do about it. With the people who jumped and who fell there was an agency in it. People who look at the pictures have to decide whether they would have done the same thing, and I think that that’s what makes people so uncomfortable,’ describes journalist Tom Junod (Faulkner 71).

Without doubt, there is a fatalism to the photograph. Both Faulkner and Junod’s remarks offer insight into the uncomfortable question running through minds of viewers. In identifying with the victims, a moral connection is created between the viewer and the subject.

Aristotle once said that “the most effective tragedies involved harms on stage (in this case in the spectacle that is 9/11) (Hariman and Lucaites “Public Identity” 43).” It is important to remember the photograph itself is not informative, as Hariman and Lucaites describe, but instead, provides a “performance of social relationships (“Public Identity” 44).” This performance ultimately forms a basis for moral deciphering and in turn, moral response. The iconic photo captured by Richard Drew “freezes the spectacle” in a montage of “moral failure (Hariman and Lucaites “Public Identity 45)” and continues to lend a sense of rupture to the hearts of viewers.

***“Jumpers”***

To comprehend the events of 9/11, we must look directly at the thoughts of the people in the upper floors of the Twin Towers in those final moments. The decision to jump from a New York City skyscraper on any other day would seem unfathomable. But in this context, the choice is undeniably terrifying. We do not know how each victim dealt with his/her situation. They may have fallen from the building by accident, or jumped because they would rather die on their own terms. Whether by accident, with purpose, or any other reason, nearly two hundred people fell from the building—that is all we know. The rest we can only speculate. Faulkner argues these people may have quite possibly acted on account of free will:

But were we to allow ourselves to imagine being trapped within those buildings and to contemplate the possibility that one might still make a choice, perhaps identification with “The Falling Man” might open the citizen to a new kind of agency in relation to government and nationhood (Faulkner 82).

This is a positive spin on the victims. I disagree with Faulkner in that the falling people could be seen as heroes. While I may personally believe this to be true, the greater audience to “The Falling Man,” I think, would not call a person falling to his death in a morbid way a hero. People would not choose “The Falling Man” as a symbol of the day. They would rather choose the photographs of rescuers.



Of course we can not give a voice to the “jumpers,” but we should not narrow our view of them as helpless. I contend the people who fell that day did so on account of reasons we do not know, but can only speculate. I argue we should not assume any particular way they came to the reality of what we now call the “falling people.”

The image hit a nerve with the public sphere. The Falling Man photo is controversial because it is, “...depicting a serene and contemplative moment, amid the surrounding chaos and violence (Faulkner 70).” The commentary surrounding the subject reveals it as aesthetic, which sparks controversy among fellow viewers.

The “Falling Man” photograph must act, as a means of identification, for so many Americans who lost loved ones that day. One man, who lost his wife, shares his thought process, which, runs parallel to mine, in that, we do not know what happened, and there is no way of coming to know. The man remarks:

Whether she jumped, I don't know. I hoped that she had succumbed to the smoke but it doesn't seem likely. In some ways it might just be the last element of control that everything around you is happening and you can't stop it, but this is something you can do. To be out of the smoke and the heat, to be out in the air ... it must have felt like flying. (Faulkner 82).

While the man speculates she may have jumped, he is sure to make known that he does not know what really happened. This is important because I think it offers a rational way of identifying with the falling people. While we do not know the thoughts or feelings of the victims, there is something we can do—not assume they died a certain way.

## Consciousness

Public morality prompts us to explore consciousness in the “Falling Man” photo, and the occasion of 9/11. Understanding consciousness will help us make sense of “The Falling Man” photograph’s effects and functions.

According to Jürgen Habermas “Deliberative rationality is subverted by visual display (Hariman and Lucaites “Public Identity” 36).” I agree with Habermas that maintaining consciousness sometimes becomes difficult when proposed with a controversial image such as “The Falling Man.” I would argue this assumption lends itself to Black’s critique, because both Habermas’ statement, and Black’s comments exhibit the idea that when sentiment is attached to an image, it may lead the audience to undermine one’s ability to think for oneself, given certain circumstance (Hariman and Lucaites “Public Identity” 36). For example, think about something you attach sentiment to (i.e. prized possession). I will argue that more than likely; you will conduct irrational thought or action to protect said possession. With an attached sentiment, the item may change your conscious thought you have about the item. I will argue the sentimental possession has the ability to strip you of rational and conscious thought.

Furthermore, Black believes the photograph strips the viewer of his ability to be trusted by the orator of democracy, which is, in this case, the government. When analyzing the “Falling Man” in these terms, it is no wonder why viewers of the public sphere, according to Faulkner and Black, have a hard time comprehending the image, within one’s own conscious mind. Their consciousness is essentially unavailable for brevity of time, and one has difficulty conceptualizing and using their consciousness.

According to Black, a defining characteristic of the “sentimental style” is the way it “seeks a total control over consciousness (Black 101).” Although the style contains a sentiment that draws the audience in, the function of the style is most important. The sentimental style, according to Black, instructs its audience exactly how to feel, leaving no freedom for members to create own opinions (Black 101). It “diligently . . . seeks to shape audience’s response (Black 101).” To that end, the extent to which “The Falling Man” is heavily captioned and commented is astounding.

While Black’s depiction of the loss of consciousness is quite extreme, I believe his idea rings true in some sense. The real issue about the “Falling Man,” is constructed by the commentary surrounding it. I certainly agree with Black when he concludes, “The result is the audience feeling certain emotions when looking at certain images (Black 102).” Within the context of “The Falling Man,” when a viewer looks at the image, the overload of caption and written supplementation provides the viewer a way to see the photograph without thinking about it for his/herself.

Tom Junod’s article produced in *Esquire Magazine* in 2003, provided more blatant means for directing his audience’s thoughts when he describes “The Falling Man” photograph:

In the picture, he departs from this earth like an arrow. Although he has not chosen his fate, he appears to have, in his last instants of life, embraced it. If he were not falling, he might very well be flying. He appears relaxed, hurtling through the air. He appears comfortable in the

grip of unimaginable motion. He does not appear intimidated by gravity's divine suction or by what awaits him (Junod).

Junod received harsh criticism for writing this article. He is not expressing the facts. He is looking at the photograph through a certain lens—his own opinion. While he may appear to be “relaxed” or “comfortable,” the viewer needs to consider the context of the photograph. The man is in his final moments of life, and that is extremely morbid. Junod’s description makes it hard for viewers to go along with what he is saying. Junod’s article is an example of veering from the facts, and using supplemental caption to persuade the reader to see the photograph in a particular lens.

Let us look back briefly to Daniel Webster’s speech at the beginning of this paper. According to Black, “auditors become an inhuman display.” While many sentimental speeches of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are not explicitly manipulative like those of Webster, Black would argue grand corruptions are still taking place, and maintain audience collective consciousness guiltless. In the age of the Internet, blogging, message boards, and Facebook wall comments, images seem to be never ‘just an image,’ but instead already have a caption or commentary which directs the viewer to think a certain way. Whether subtly blatantly, persuasion, by way of commentary accompanying the photograph, plays a role.

Black explains consciousness among the audience as incompletely realized at the time of the tragedy (or days following), versus today. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, audiences allowed for orators to corrupt, forfeiting moral apprehension. While Black explains orators of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were known to blind the auditors with a fog of sentiment,

there is a sentiment at 9/11 that also has an effect on viewers (Black 107). Today, in the age of the Internet especially, when discourse is attached to sentiment by way of commentary, or captions, viewers are given a narrative to believe. The narrative in the case of “The Falling Man” created a response of anger.

The *Morning Call* news staff knew passionate response would follow the publication. Photo editor Naomi Halperin said: “You know, and you have to know, going into this, that you are going to get reader response and it is going to be heavy, and it is going to be angry, and a lot of it can be misdirected anger, but we get it(9/11: *The Falling Man*).” The following three responses share the response of viewers of “The Falling Man” directly following September 11, 2001.

Small business owner, Bob Messinger is one of many people who wrote a letter to the editor to the Morning Call following the publication of “The Falling Man.” He wrote: “It was with utter disgust that I read the September 12<sup>th</sup> edition, I turned the page only to see a large photo of some poor soul plummeting a thousand feet head first to certain death (9/11: *The Falling Man*).” The public clearly identified with the victim, and felt his life was exploited in some way.

School secretary, Deborah Holets, wrote: “Do not let your children read the morning call. The half page colored picture of a man falling out of the window was used in such poor judgment (9/11: *The Falling Man*).” Holets hoped the photograph be censored, especially from the eyes of children. I think this makes sense to an extent. Television shows, and movies censor footage with the degree of morality, so why is this allowed? Although parents hated the easy access to the photograph, I

think is was important to show, for it captured what was happening in America, the place these people live.

Ken Myers, a salesperson, when interviewed, felt the need to express his personality before describing his reaction to the photograph: "I'm not an angry guy, I am pretty much a very passive person. Nothing fazes me. I am very light-hearted. But that day, that picture, it just made me angry (*9/11: The Falling Man*)." Myers' response is valuable because it shows the outrage is not based on people with dramatic demeanors. Americans were outraged at immediate publication of "The Falling Man" photograph.

In the next few responses are made regarding "The Falling Man" 10 years after 9/11. One retired banker, 58, said:

"I think we need to remind ourselves of how fragile all of our lives are and how suddenly horrific events can change them, and be mindful of the preciousness and be reminded of the loss that we all suffered on 9/11.

While this picture is very difficult to look at it captures all of those feeling in one scene (Konkol)."

This man's response regarding the photograph ten years later shows less anger than in 2001, and more understanding. While many Americans share a view on viewing the photograph more acceptable, some still believe people do not need to see it.

Deborah Browder, even 10 years after 9/11, thinks the photograph is too intense. The 47 year-old executive assistant said: "I don't think there's any benefit showing it. It disturbs. Too many bad memories. It's too much. It's just so real. We know what happened, but I don't think it's necessary to look at that (Konkol)." The photograph still

stands in controversy. While some Americans have recovered from the trauma, others still seem to find the photograph unbearable to view. The unbearable nature created such negative effect among viewers, publishers decided to never run the photo again, in effect, censoring “The Falling Man.”

### **Censorship**

The censorship of “The Falling Man” is what first prompted me to write this analysis. I was astounded at the public response—how could people be upset to such an extent that they write letters to newspapers in outrage? Faulkner describes the timeline of the censoring of the image at hand in the following quote:

Drew’s image made its first public debut the morning after the attacks, on the front page of a number of regional newspapers and page 7 of the *New York Times*. It suffered immediate censure, by the media and the general public who viewed it, and was withdrawn from circulation (Faulkner 70).

The timeline by which the censoring of the image occurred is particularly interesting. At first, it was appropriate for publications to write on the falling people, however, just following the attacks, the press began a wave of censorship surrounding the event (*9/11: The Falling Man*).

I would like briefly to point out the controversy over the use of the word “jumper” in the context of its censorship. Because of the commentary of the word jumper, and the controversial implication of suicide, a range of officials hoped to block out the use of the word “jumper” to describe the falling victims. Faulkner describes,

In a curious gesture of ‘forgetting,’ or repression, the New York Medical Examiner’s Office refused to classify these people as having jumped, stating that ‘a ‘jumper’ is somebody who goes to the office in the morning knowing that they will commit suicide (Faulkner 70).’

This decision-making ran all across new mediums, forcing all editorial staff working on this event to rethink the usage of the term “jumper.”

### ***Psychological Reactance and “Scarcity”***

There is an irony in “The Falling Man.” Could it be that the acts of censoring the image makes us want to view it more, and place more significant on the image? It is interesting that once the “The Falling Man” photograph was run once, it never graced the pages of a newspaper ever again. Following the outraged response, the photograph became scarce. I am going to argue for renowned psychology scholar, Robert Cialdini’s concept of “scarcity.” In effect, “scarcity” is attributable to the “Falling Man” as an “iconic photograph”: one that people, given time, were drawn to.

“Scarcity” is a principle by which, “opportunities seem more valuable (to the viewer) when their availability is limited. This principle can be applied to several contexts. To grasp an idea of the concept in contexts other than print media, an example of the strategy is found in business deals where sellers emphasize how the car the buyers want is the last one in stock. However, Cialdini does make clear how the concept is extensively connected with the social environment, through many contexts.



I argue the scarcity principle is at work in the case of the photograph “The Falling Man.” “As opportunity becomes less available, we lose freedoms, and we hate to lose freedoms we already have (Cialdini 251).” The fact that the photo ran once, then never again, in a way, strips the reader of something they once had easier access to. This particular sub-concept I am beginning to describe is known as “Psychological Reactance.” When “scarcity” stands in the way of access to something we once had in circulation humans will “react against the interference (Cialdini 251)” and want it more.

Cialdini directly recognizes photojournalism and censorship in regard to the “scarcity” principle.

In an age when the ability to acquire, store and manage information is becoming increasingly the determinant of wealth and power, it is important to understand how we typically react to attempts to censor or otherwise constrain our access to information (Cialdini 251).

Sure, with the Internet today, it may be easier to find uncensored material. However, it is the reaction by which people have at the “scarcity” or attempt to censor, in the example of the Internet. With the instance of “The Falling Man,” I think the public’s reaction to value limited information tells us something about how people act, and helps us further understand why they act in the ways they do. This irony extends to the idea that the item doesn’t need to be censored completely, but scarce. Exclusiveness is eye-catching for people. Its restriction draws us toward it.

Notably, Cialdini finds, our tendency as humans to react in such a passionate way to it items that we once had access to, and now our stripped from us, has been entrenched in our psychologies from the time we were turning three years old (Cialdini 246). While two year olds haven't yet mastered tendency to lash out when control is taken from them, "for the rest of us, the pool of reactant energy lies quiet and covered, erupting geyserlike only on occasion (Cialdini 249)." This description is very applicable to human adults in times of crisis. Thus, the viewers of the "Falling Man" only innately, respond to the photo in such outraged fashion.

## **Conclusion**

My paper has explored many issues concerning "The Falling Man." While I first acknowledged two differing viewpoints on the use of sentiment within public discourse, I journeyed from the verbal to visual rhetorical era. Upon exploring functions of the public sphere, I chose to tackle psychological components concerning "The Falling Man" including Faulkner's "innocence" and consciousness. These ideas were useful when I finally explored "The Falling Man" photograph within its own context—the media. Photojournalism decisions involve a great deal of thought, as they will affect billions of people. Identification and public morality serve as a means for understanding why the public responded in the outrage. Lastly, I found it appropriate to discuss theories concerning the photograph's censoring from the press after September 12, 2001. Overall, I think the discussion will be useful for people to gain insight on the controversial photo.

As mentioned previously, I chose the iconic photograph, "The Falling Man", taken by Richard Drew on September 11, 2001 as my topic for my senior paper because

of the controversial response it created among viewers. This response, we have found, can be attributed to a wide range of psychological, political, sociological, and journalistic viewpoints. I hope that my contribution to visual rhetorical analysis and an analysis of photojournalism will be helpful for further study of “The Falling Man” and other iconic photographs.

I do not think it would be correct to say questions have been necessarily answered by my analysis. However, by researching and evaluating viewpoints of significant scholars, rhetoricians, journalists, and editorialists, scholars can contribute to further research concerning the public sphere within Sociology, Psychology and Communication Studies.

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