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Picturing Soldaderas: Agency, Allegory, and Memory in Images of the 1910 Mexican Revolution

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Art History

by

Jessica Lynn Orzulak

August 2014

Thesis Committee:
Dr. Jason Weems, Chairperson
Dr. Liz Kotz
Dr. Freya Schiwy

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2014

The Thesis of Jessica Lynn Orzulak is approved:

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Picturing Soldaderas: Agency, Allegory, and Memory in Images of the 1910 Mexican Revolution

by

Jessica Lynn Orzulak

Master of Arts, Graduate Program in Art History
University of California, Riverside, August 2014
Dr. Jason Weems, Chairperson

The violent phase of the 1910 Mexican Revolution figured prominently in the media and fine arts of Mexico during the war and in its aftermath. Documentary photography from the violent phase of the Revolution and revolutionary themed Mexican art in the first half of the twentieth century articulated revolutionary women, or '*soldaderas*,' as figures divorced from their subjectivity and fashioned them into allegorical characters of the Revolution.

Portraits in the archive of photographs documenting the violent phase of the Revolution present a layered depiction of revolutionary Mexican women. On the one hand they present an image of the self-constructed identity of individual women who are often not given a voice in the historical narrative of the Revolution. On the other hand the portraits represent multiple symbolic constructions that compete for dominance in the experience of viewing the images and negate a sense of individual-

ness. The intersection of photography's ability to engender a sense of transparency and the negation of individuality in the images begin an articulation of *soldaderas* as symbolic figures and hinder a discussion of women's agency.

In the 1940's these photographs were called upon as objects of collective memory in the process of creating a master narrative of the Revolution. This occurred during a period when the political apparatus was manufacturing a new national identity through the Revolution as a symbol of Mexico's ideal ideology. The construction of the *soldadera's* symbolic identity was continued in artworks that acted as objects of postmemory. They functioned to create an absent connection to the traumatic past of the violent phase of the Revolution through fantasy, invention, and projection. This is especially evident in the 1947 portfolio published by the artists' collective El Taller de Gráfica Popular, titled *Estampas de la Revolución Méxicana.* It re-remembers the Revolution as a cohesive ideological conflict and reinvents the role of women in the war as inherently domestic while also subverting negative stereotypes about *soldaderas*. Women are positioned in these art images as the symbolic foundational caretakers of a new nation, who are inextricably tied to notions of indigeneity and origination.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements..... iv

Abstract..... vi

List of Images..... ix

Introduction..... 1
History of the Revolution..... 8
Defining the *Soldadera*.....12

Chapter One:
Portraits of Mexican Revolutionary Women: Subjects and Objects in the Casasola Archive..... 21
Portraits in the Casasola Archive: Performing Individuality and Anonymity..... 26
Symbols of the Revolution: The Soldadera and the Sombrero..... 42
Iconicity..... 56

Chapter Two:
Soldaderas and Postmemory in the *Estampas de la Revolución Méxicana* Portfolio..... 69
Caretakers of the Revolution..... 74
Bare Feet, Braids and Dresses: Picturing Class and Indigenousness..... 99
La Adelita: the Revolutionary Lover..... 108

Epilogue.....117

Bibliography.....119

Appendix A.....127

List of Illustrations

Figure 1. José Clemente Orozco, *Soldaderas*, 1920. Oil on Canvas. Original Collection of J. M. Puig Cassauranc; Collection of Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico City. See pages 1, 85.

Figure 2. Alfredo Zalce, "La Soldadera" No. 43, *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*, 1947. Linoleum cut. University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque. See pages 1, 79, 80.

Figure 3.

a. (Recto) Unknown, *Untitled (Señorita Ma Gonzales Garcia)*, n.d. Photographic postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside. See pages 1, 31, 34.
b. (Verso) Postcard with handwritten note (United States Postal Service). See pages 34, 36.

Figure 4. Unknown, *Maria Zavala arrodillada sobre vias del ferrocaril*, n.d. SINAFO-Fototeca Nacional del INAH, # 6219. See pages 15, 63.

Figure 5. Jerónimo Hernández, *Soldadera, Mexico City*, April 12. Fondo Casasola, SINAFO-Fototeca Nacional del INAH, #5760. See pages 22, 67.

Figure 6. Unknown, *Untitled*, n.d. Fondo Casasola, SINAFO-Fototeca Nacional del INAH. See page 24.

Figure 7. Unknown, *Villa en la silla presidencial*, 1914. Fondo Casasola, SINAFO-Fototeca Nacional del INAH. See page 30.

Figure 8. Unknown, *Untitled (Comandante Barrañada)*, 1913. Photographic postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside. See pages 32, 37, 42.

Figure 9. L.R. Pimentel, *Untitled, No. 118 (General Benjamin Argumedo*), n.d. Photographic postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside. See pages 32, 37, 42.

Figure 10. Unknown, *Two mounted Villista Soldaderas*, circa 1914. Sunset Magazine, 1914. Image source: *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military*, by Elizabeth Salas, Figure 12. See page 36.

Figure 11. Unknown, *Soldaderas under the command of Adolfo de la Huerta*, 1925. Fondo Casasola, Fototeca del INAH, Pachuca Hidalgo. See page 36.

Figure 12. Unknown, *Romualdo Saeriz, Crack Shot of Mexico, 29*, n.d. Photographic Postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside. See pages 37, 42.

Figure 13. Unknown, *Cooking for Mexican Army*, 302, n.d. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside. See page 39.

Figure 14. José Clemente Orozco, *La Bandera*, 1928. Lithograph. Printer: George C. Miller. Edition: 100 prints; some copies unnumbered; artist's proofs. See pages 40, 85.

Figure 15.

a. (Recto) Antonio Garduño, *Una Zapatista, no. 465*, n.d. Photographic postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside. See page 44.
b. (Verso) Blank postcard (United States Postal Service). See page 44.

Figure 16. John Vanderlyn, *Landing of Columbus*, 1846. Oil on canvas. Rotunda, United States Capitol Building, Washington D.C., commissioned for and placed in 1847. See page 48.

Figure 17. Luca Giordano, *Archangel Michael Hurls the Rebellious Angels into the Abyss*, 1660-1665. Oil on canvas. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, inv. GG 350. Erich Lessing/ART RESOURCE, N.Y. See page 49.

Figure 18. Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830. Oil on canvas. Louvre-Lens, Pas-de-Calais, France. See page 50.

Figure 19. Hugo Brehme, *Emiliano Zapata, Cuernavaca, Morelos*, May 1911. Fondo Casasola, SINAFO – Fototeca Nacional del INAH, # 63464. See pages 51.

Figure 20. Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Portrait of Louis XIV*, 18th century. Oil on canvas. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program. See page 51.

Figure 21. Unknown (Walter H. Horne), *A scene along the trail of Pancho Villa in Mexico*, 3013, n.d. Walter H. Horne Co., El Paso Texas. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside. See page 52.

Figure 22. D. W. Hoffman, Red Cross, circa 1915. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside. See pages 59.

Figure 23. Unknown*, Untitled (Officer with pistol)*, n.d. Fondo Casasola, SINAFO-Fototeca Nacional del INAH. See page 63.

Figure 24. Unknown, Untitled (Soldier on train), n.d. Fondo Casasola, SINAFO-Fototeca Nacional del INAH. See page 63.

Figure 25. Unknown, *Dead Mexican Bandits*, n.d. Photographic postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside. See page 67.

Figure 26. Unknown, *Executing Bandits in Mexico, 854*, n.d. Photographic postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside. See page 67.

Figure 27. Unknown, *Burning the bodies of dead bandits at Columbus NM*, n.d. Photographic postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside. See page 67.

Figure 28. David Alfaro Siqueiros, Detail of *The Agrarian Revolution of Emiliano Zapata*, (from *Porfirianism to the Revolution*) 1926. Fresco. Museo Nacional de Historia, Castillo de Chapultepec, Mexico City, Mexico. See page 70.

Figure 29. José Clemente Orozco, *Zapatistas*, 1931. Oil on canvas. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art New York. © 2014 José Clemente Orozco/ artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ SOMAAP, Mexico. See page 70.

Figure 30. Alberto Beltrán, "Las guerrillas contra la dictadura de Victoranio Huerta" No. 43, *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*, 1947. Linoleum cut. University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque. See page 79, 101.

Figure 31. Mariana Yampolsky, "Vivac de Revolucionarios" No. 49, *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*, 1947. Linoleum cut. University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque. See pages 79, 92.

Figure 32. Ignacio Aguirre, "La Adelita," cover to *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*, 1947. Linoleum cut. University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque. See pages 79, 110.

Figure 33. Fernando Castro Pacheco, "Aquiles Serdán y su familia inician en Puebla la Revolución armada. 18 Noviembre 1910" No. 22, *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*, 1947. Linoleum cut. University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque. See page 83.

Figure 34. José Clemente Orozco, *Rear Guard*, 1929. Lithograph. Printer: George C. Miller, 100 prints; some copies unnumbered. See page 84.

Figure 35. José Clemente Orozco, *Mujer Grávida,* 1929. Lithograph. Printer: George C. Miller, 100 prints, counterproof; some copies unnumbered. See page 84.

Figure 36. Unknown, *Untitled (Soldiers resting with rifles)*, n.d. Fondo Casasola, SINAFO- Fototeca Nacional del INAH, # 5172. See page 87.

Figure 37. Charles B. Waite, *Young girl posing, Mexico*, circa 1900. Archivo General de la Naciónal, Fondo Propiedad Artística y Literaria, Colección C. B. Waite, sobre 77. See page 105.

Figure 38. José Clemente Orozco, *Turistas y aztecas*, 1935. Lithograph. Printer: Jesús Arteaga, 167 prints. See page 105.

Figure 39. Jean Charlot, *Leopard Hunter*, 1929. Lithograph. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. © 2014 Jean Charlot/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. See page 105.

Figure 40. Clara Mairs, *Mexico City*, 1938. Etching and aquatint. See pages 105, 107.

Figure 41. Diego Rivera, *The Liberated Earth with Natural Forces Controlled by Man*, 1927. Fresco. Escuela Nacional de Chapingo, Mexico. © 2011 Banco de México Diego Rivera & Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, México, D.F./ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photograph by Schalkwijk/Art Resource, New York. See page 106.

Figure 42. Unknown, *Untitled (Battle damaged urban building),* n.d. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside. See page 106.

Figure 43. Francisco Díaz León, T*he Pilgrims,* 1930. Etching with aquatint. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Jean Charlot, 1931. See page 107.

Figure 44. Francisco Dosamantes, *Three Yalaltecan Women*, 1946. Lithograph. Museum of Fine Arts Boston. Gift of W. G. Russell Allen. See page 107.

Figure 45. Diego Rivera, *Sugar Cane*, 1931. Fresco. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Cameron Morris, 1943. © 2011 Banco de México Diego Rivera & Frida Kahlo Museums Trust México, D.F./ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. See page 107.

Introduction

A desolate, faceless figure trudges forward with the weight of a child on her back, a poor woman tends to the wounds of a soldier, and a pleasantly smiling woman poses for the camera bristling with weapons (Figures 1, 2, and 3). This is the spectacle of women participants in the 1910 Mexican Revolution that overthrew the Porfiriato constructed during the war and in its aftermath.[1] The memory of the Revolution remained a critical political tool and social ideal even after the generations that experienced it firsthand had passed. The popular images represent a small number of photographs and artworks that have been employed in the process of creating institutional and civic narratives of the war and Mexico's history.

Though often imagined as separate, history and memory are entwined discourses that construct and manipulate not only our ideas about the past but the present and the future as well. History as a type of collective memory shapes the framework with which we think about societal roles, identity, and documented facts. In naming something historical it is conflated with "actually having happened," yet the reality of documenting something is often murky and easily manipulated. Images can become particularly problematic objects of historical evidence within this structure. The manufactured position of revolutionary Mexican women in the body of images relating to the war in both the contemporaneous period and the

[1] The term "Porfiriato" refers to the dictatorship that controlled the Mexican government, run by Porfirio Díaz from 1884 until 1911.

postwar era reflects the ways that identity is both constructed and removed through objects of visual culture.

The violent phase of the Revolution figured prominently in the media and art of Mexico both during the war and in the subsequent decades. Images that figure women revolutionaries, or '*soldaderas,*' reflect an attempt to position women squarely into roles that have little to nothing to do with battle. The images produced during the war documenting the conflict often offer depictions of agency and self-constructed identity but they also disconnect the women from violence in a thematic way. Postwar art images further that disconnect by imagining them as symbolic figures that are tied to domestic labor and caregiving, or are attached to men whom they follow out of domestic duty and sexual desire.

The war and the people involved in it were captured in photographs taken by journalists and documentary photographers in immense numbers. Though concrete figures are unknown the largest current archive of photographs from the Revolution, known as the Casasola Archive, holds a catalogued 484, 993 photographic objects.[2] Additionally, smaller archives like the Osuna Collection, which holds 427 glass negatives, add to the total number of surviving photographs. The photographic record captured the images of women, men, and even children

[2] For information regarding specific numbers of photographs and photographic objects from the Revolution see Sergio Raúl Arroyo, "*The Casasola Collection in the INAH National Photo Library,*" in *Mexico, the revolution and beyond: photographs by Augustín Victor Casasola, 1900-1940*, ed. Pete Hamill and Agustín Víctor Casasola (New York; Mexico City: Aperture; CONCULTA-INAH, 2003), 11; and Rosa Casanova, *Luces Sobre Mexico/ Lights over Mexico* (México: SIN COLECCION, 2006).

involved in the war. Revolutionary women make up only a small segment of the images in the archive, but their photographs depict them as entrenched in the many different factions fighting for political control in the country. Following the decade of conflict the image of both the Revolution and its constituents were re-constructed in post-revolutionary art in everything from murals and paintings, to prints and posters.

The Revolution remained an integral part of the collective social and political memory for decades following the violent phase. This point is demonstrated particularly well in the continued thematic use of the Revolution in Mexican art well into the mid-twentieth century. Revolutionaries moved from the real life subjects of photographs into figures modeled from the memories and imaginations of artists. In the 1920's and early 1930's women involved in the war were pictured alongside armed male revolutionaries in the murals of Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Jose Clemente Orozco. Later, in the 1930's through the 1950's a generation of artists who did not experience the violent phase of the Revolution firsthand reconstructed its narrative in graphic art through content pilfered from photographs, memories of revolutionaries, and historical data. The narrative presented a unified vision of the war and its ideology for a domestic Mexican audience.[3] The postwar consolidation of ideology in many of the artistic visions paralleled government actions to create an institutional collective memory of a

[3] Mary Theresa Avila, "Chronicles of Revolution and Nation: El Taller de Gráfica Popular's 'Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana' (1947)" (Dissertation, July 2, 2013 https://repository.unm.edu/handle/1928/23082), 30-40.

distinct and centralized narrative that could act as a foundation for Mexico's burgeoning national identity. Professor and postcolonial theorist Benedict Anderson argues that such reformations of collective memory are imperative for the development of national identities and even nations themselves.[4] As such the images represent a deep tie to the construction of social identities as well.

Images of women, and specifically *soldaderas*, in the graphic art of the postwar period function as one element within the ideological reconstruction of the history of the war that builds on and dismantles earlier stereotypes around female revolutionaries and gender. Though their image was continuously constructed and reconstructed throughout the war and the postwar period their historical position and role in the conflict was contested. Following the Revolution their actions were systematically erased and resituated in both historical terms and artistic representations to reflect a more limited role confined to actions socially accepted as feminine. While this may not be surprising it is crucial to investigate how it is related to the construction of gendered identity in order to better understand the manner in which images can affect the process in which difference is manufactured. This is especially relevant because of the way that socially shaped identities may be employed to disenfranchise certain groups.

Art historians and feminist theorists have established that gender identity is formed through politics, economics, social organizations, and importantly

[4] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Revised Edition* (London ; New York: Verso, 2006).

"historically specific cultural representations."[5] The image of *soldaderas* in documentary photography and later postwar works of art represent a portion of the larger cultural representation of women and femininity in Mexico. I approach femininity and, in a larger sense, gender as a position rather than an identity, that is constructed socially and reaffirmed within social and visual discourse.[6] The position of femininity in Mexican culture directly before and during the Revolution was narrowly tied to the domestic and confined by strict notions of respectability.

Societal norms in early twentieth-century Mexico were a continuation of the 1857 constitution and early reform laws.[7] These laws circumscribed women's participation to the "holy zone," essentially the household and the church and resulted in what Carlos Monsiváis has called the "sanctification of woman's backwardness."[8] Women working outside of the home in the late nineteenth century were considered to be amoral, deviant, and sexually available.[9] Despite these cultural conditions women were traditional participants in warfare. They had been involved in large-scale conflicts in multiple roles in the region that is now Mexico beginning in pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica and continuing through the 1910

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[5] Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1, 1986): 1068.

[6] Adriana Zavala, *Becoming modern, becoming tradition: women, gender, and representation in Mexican art* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 11-13.

[7] Carlos Monsiváis, introduction to *Sex in revolution: gender, politics, and power in modern Mexico,* ed. Jocelyn Olcott, Mary K Vaughan, and Gabriela Cano (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 2.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid, 24.

Revolution.[10] By the early twentieth century their role in war had become controversial. In 1901 the sociological writings of Julio Guerrero appraised the *soldaderas* role in society as threatening, arguing that they were a menace.[11] The *soldadera* specifically had been designated as a "woman of low status and bad manners," and as intractable prostitutes who spoke the lowest language of the peoples.[12] Moreover, women in general were facing serious pushback in their fight for civil rights as evidenced by the publications of a conservative writer in 1904 who described feminism as the "suicide of the race."[13] This sentiment mirrored the attitude of the federal army during the revolutionary conflict, which saw *soldaderas* as an obstruction to a modernized force.[14] They attempted to ban women from the ranks multiple times during the 1910 Revolution but were met with resistance both from the women who largely ignored them and from the male soldiers who relied on them.

Images of *soldaderas* in documentary photographs and their representations in postwar art reflect the social and cultural tensions around their involvement in the violent phase of the Revolution. Both the photographic archive of the war and

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[10] See Ángeles Mendieta Alatorre, *La mujer en la Revolución Mexicana* (Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1961); and Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military: myth and history* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990).

[11] Julio Guerrero, *La génesis del crimen en México: Estudio de Pisquiatría Social* (Vda de C. Bouret, 1901), 764, http://archive.org/details/lagnesisdelcrim00guergoog.

[12] Luis Leal, *Aztlan Y Mexico: Perfiles Literarios E Historicos* (Binghamton, N.Y: Bilingual Pr, 1985), 185.

[13] Ingacio Gamboa, *La mujer moderna* (University of California Libraries, 1906), 51.

[14] Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military: myth and history* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 37.

the graphic arts in the postwar period that utilize the image of the *soldadera* distance the figures from the violence of the war while still symbolically connecting them to it through objects that visually signify the conflict. As art historian Griselda Pollock has argued "looking, seeing and representing visually" operates in ways that often hide the formulation of differences.[15] In this thesis I will argue that popular photographic images from the war and postwar art images of *soldaderas* function to both construct and hide difference. I contend that the image of revolutionary women in both documentary war photography and later postwar art articulate the women as symbolic figures rather than individuals who participated in the war in meaningful ways. The two seemingly divergent periods are connected through the use of the photographs as objects of memory and historical evidence within a larger effort to create a foundational national identity. Furthermore I will argue that postwar art images build on and simplify the content from the photographs resulting in individual women being made into the more symbolic figure of the *soldadera.* The symbolic figure is divorced from the subjectivity of the individuals, which aids in the fashioning of the character into an allegorical image of the Revolution.

[15] Griselda Pollock, *Vision and difference: femininity, feminism, and histories of art* (London [etc.]: Routledge, 1988), xvii.

History of the Revolution

During the nineteenth century Mexico experienced various small peasant rebellions focused on agrarian reform. Prior to 1910 a large-scale revolution was considered impossible by the press and public. Karl Bunz, a diplomat from Germany wrote in the fall of 1909, "I believe as does the press and public opinion that a general revolution in not possible at all."[16] The opinion of the press was expressed in the pivotal Mexican journal *El Impartial*, which stated in 1909 "a Revolution in Mexico is impossible."[17] In spite of the seeming inconceivability of the breakout of a sizeable war the Revolution began in 1910 with a series of multiple and disjointed uprisings. The multiple factions involved fought not only against the political regime of Porfirio Díaz but eventually against each other, struggling for political supremacy in Mexico in the years following the ousting of Díaz's government.

Social, economic, and political factors attributed to the Revolution becoming a reality. Mexico's society was oligarchic and authoritarian leaving little space for upward movement or political opportunity. Historians Héctor Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer argue that though Díaz brought a great deal of industrial progress to Mexico the social fabric of the country could not absorb all the innovations.[18] Additionally, Mexico experienced a large increase in population growth during the Díaz regime but the wealth being accumulated was strongly centered in individual

[16] Héctor Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer, *In the shadow of the Mexican revolution: contemporary Mexican history, 1910-1989* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 1.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

fortunes leaving an ever-growing portion of the population extremely poor.[19] In 1908 severe weather and other natural disasters added to the growing tension by causing a dramatic drop in food availability.[20]

Francisco Madero, a wealthy intellectual and a strong opponent of Díaz, triggered the Revolution with the publication of his Plan de San Luis Potosí. In it he called to invalidate the recent "reelection" of Díaz to the presidential post as illegal and for the Mexican people to take up arms in response on November 20, 1910.[21] Initially the Federal troops controlled the outbreaks of rebellion easily but the tides turned in February, 1911 when troops led by Francisco "Pancho" Villa and Pascual Orozco began to succeed in battle.[22] Madero officially became President on October 1, 1911. Though there was only a short one hundred days between the beginning of the Revolution and Díaz's capitulation neither the Revolution or the violence would come to an end.

Madero did not remain President for long. His consequent reversal on reforms promised in the Plan de San Luis Potosí following his election resulted in him losing much of his popular support, especially within the army. The Zapatista insurrection in the south established the Plan de Ayala in 1911, accusing Madero of

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[19] Ibid, 4.

[20] Luis Gonzáles, "El liberalism triunfante," in *Historia general de México*, vol. 2. (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1981): 899-1015.

[21] From United States Congress, Senate Subcommittee on Foreign Relations, *Revolutions in Mexico*, 62nd Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913), 730-736, passim.

[22] Edwin Lieuwen, *Mexican militarism: the political rise and fall of the revolutionary army, 1910-1940* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), 9.

violating the principles he had promised to uphold.[23] Along with the help of the United States government the General in charge of the Mexican army, Victoriano Huerta successfully completed a coup, and executed Madero on February 19, 1913.[24] After taking power Huerta experienced strong opposition from multiple fronts including forces in Sonora, Coahuila, and the Villistas in the north, while the Zapatistas in the south quickly called for the Mexican people to take up arms in opposition once again.[25]

The governor of Coahuilla, Venustiano Carranza, crafted the Plan de Guadalupe, recognizing himself as First Chief of the Constitutionalist Revolution in the spring of 1913. On August 14, 1914 Carranza's forces compelled Huerta's surrender and abdication from power. Carranza did not enjoy a stable hold on political power either and the multiple factions would continue to fight against each other for years.[26] In 1917 Carranza was officially elected President of Mexico and a new constitution was drafted, two years later Emiliano Zapata was murdered. The end to the violent phase of the Revolution is generally agreed to have come in 1920 when Carranza's appointed General Álvaro Obregón entered Mexico City at the head

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[23] Plan de Ayala, translated by John Womack in *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011), 400-404. Though I was unable to access an original copy in Spanish Latin American historian John Womack included a full, translated version in his book originally published in 1969.

[24] Aguilar Camín, Héctor, and Lorenzo Meyer, *In the shadow of the Mexican revolution,* 35. For a more in depth history of the overthrow of Francisco Madero and the involvement of the United States government in the coup see pages 31 through 37 of *In the Shadow of the Revolution : Contemporary Mexican History*.

[25] Ibid, 37.

[26] Adolfo Gilly, *La revolución interrumpida. México, 1910-1920: una Guerra campesina por la tierra y el poder* (Mexico City: Ediciones Caballito, 1971).

of some 40,000 revolutionary troops with the goal of unseating Carranza.[27] However, the end date of the war continues to be debated in the scholarship because minor outbreaks of violence continued into the early years of the 1920's, including Villa's assassination on July 20, 1923 and a rebellion headed by Adolfo de la Huerta in opposition of Obregón in 1923. However, the political reforms Obregón subsequently instituted helped to stabilize the political system and the balance of power in the country, as well as to strengthen the central government.[28]

The use of the term 'the Revolution,' in histories is often utilized to reference the uprisings that began in 1910 overthrowing the dictatorial Díaz and the subsequent violent civil war. In more recent histories and academic writing scholars have begun to delineate the divergent nature of the violent phase and the subsequent continued political ideology and activities. Thus making clear that revolutionary social ideals and goals did not end with the war. The agrarian and social reforms sought after by the various factions during the uprisings never fully materialized, but many politicians claimed to be continuing the Revolution through other avenues. Despite these advancements in the scholarship in this thesis I will continue to reference the violent phase as the Revolution, except where deemed necessary to delineate the differences. This is prudent chiefly because the art objects that I am examining employ images of the violent phase of the Revolution

[27] Lieuwen, *Mexican militarism*, 57.
[28] Ibid.

symbolically. Images of the war become an emblem of the ideology, visualizing the abstract goals of social and political revolution, especially in chapter two.

Defining the *Soldadera*

I am hesitant to circumscribe women involved with the war with a single name like *soldadera* because it has many interpretations and underlying implications. Historians and artists have used the term *soldadera* to label revolutionary women in the 1910 conflict but its meaning is not obvious and its history and connotations need to be evaluated. As historian Elizabeth Salas points out women in indigenous groups in Mesoamerica played an important role in battles between groups before the conquest. There is evidence that prior to the tribe's destruction in A.D. 1008 Toltec women fought as tribal defenders.[29] The Mexica people especially, included women in warfare. In battle they acted as warriors and even war chiefs. Outside of battle they acted within the community to make decisions and voice opinions about entering into conflicts with other groups. Others were trained as *auinanimes*, meaning pleasure girls, for male warriors.[30] The women trained for this position came from within the Mexica community as well as from war captives. They held a simultaneously honored and reviled position in their

[29] June Nash, "The Aztecs and the Ideology of Male Dominance," *Signs* 4, no. 2 (December 1, 1978): 353.
[30] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military,* 9.

society, viewed as both wicked women and as rewards for warrior's work.[31] Following the beginning of the colonization of the Americas by Europeans in the fifteenth century the Spanish historian Fray Juan Torquemada noted that women acted as intermediaries and were scattered throughout the warriors during battles.[32]

Women's involvement in warfare continued into and beyond the Spanish conquest where women were used as servants for the troops by both foreign and domestic forces.[33] Though women were abducted and forced into service on occasion this was not always the case. Those who acted as servants were paid and worked essentially as laborers who had the option to choose which soldiers they wished to be employed by. They could change their positions or employers at any time.[34] By far and in large *soldaderas* have been inaccurately identified as relatives or wives of soldiers who were not employed in any manner.[35] In reality outside of soldiering their activities were understood as work and their payment as "financial transactions."[36] During the multiple wars with the Spanish, Americans, and French

[31] Diego Durán, *Book of the Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calendar* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), 298.
[32] Frances Gillmor, *King Danced in the Marketplace* (Salt Lake City: Univ of Utah Pr, 1978), 190.
[33] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military*, xi.
[34] Ibid, xii. Some soldaderas were abducted and initially forced into service, however this is not the case with the majority.
[35] Ibid, xii.
[36] Ibid, 28.

between the 16th and 19th centuries the corps of camp followers who cooked and carried supplies was often as large as the troops themselves.[37]

During the Revolution thousands of women were involved with the many factions of troops, including the Villistas, Maderistas, Zapatistas, Carranistas, as well as the Federal forces. There were differing levels of anxiety and disapproval aimed at *soldaderas* in all the factions. Pancho Villa seemed to be the most vehemently against their inclusion, though his opposition did not bar them from joining his forces.[38] They are described as acting as camp followers, soldiers, and sexual partners but distinguishing between these roles is difficult. The camp followers were paid women who offered services like the procuring and cooking of food, washing, and doing jobs such as bringing the men they worked for ammunition and food during battles. At the same time those who were understood to be camp followers rather than female soldiers were known to fight as well. They are noted as picking up the rifles of the men they worked for during battle and fighting in their places while they ate.[39] Additionally men also acted in this role, showing that it was not necessarily a gendered position. In terms of sexual interactions, positioning women as merely lovers or wives is inaccurate. Women did act as prostitutes, some did follow family members or husbands into the war, and some were abducted and

[37] Ibid, 11.

[38] Elena Poniatowska and David Dorado Romo, *Las soldaderas: women of the Mexican Revolution* (El Paso: Cinco Puntos Press, 2006).

[39] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military*, 44. This is described by the Captain Francisco Macías, a Villista.

raped, but describing women as merely following their lovers does not account for the reality that they too were engaged in fighting.

As soldiers they did the same jobs as men and rose in the ranks into positions such as colonel and lieutenant. Women like Petra Herrera and Petra Ruiz made names for themselves as soldiers and their actions during the war remained part of the popular narrative following the conflict. María Zavala, for instance, is famous for using explosives against enemy trains during the Huerta uprising (Figure 4).[40] In addition to being fighters under command, some women were in charge of their own battalions.[41] Though they were involved in every faction they did not enjoy complete acceptance by officers or the leadership. Many objected to their presence and attempted to deny them the ability to join the ranks. The attempt to bar them access was part of a larger move by the military factions, and especially the Federal forces, to modernize and westernize the army.[42] During the Revolution these attempts were met with considerable resistance, in 1912 soldiers in the Federal forces threatened mutiny when the Secretary of War banned *soldaderas* from following the army.[43]

The term *soldadera* has a complicated set of inferences that are often contradictory. They tend to relate more to the socially constructed ideal of

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[40] Alex Hughes and Andrea Noble, *Phototextualities: Intersections of Photography and Narrative*, 1 edition (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 138.
[41] Ibid, 48.
[42] Lieuwen, *Mexican militarism,* 94. In 1925 the Minister of War, General Joaquín Amaro banned women from the barracks.
[43] Michael C. Meyer, William L Sherman, and Susan M Deeds, *The course of Mexican history* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 555.

femininity and gendered work than that of the actual actions or labor of the women involved in the Mexican Revolution. It also represents a Victorian moralization/Westernization of a role that women in pre-conquest Mexico played during tribal warfare.[44] The meaning of the word itself has changed in the course of its use in Mexico. The term was introduced by the Spanish during the conquest and is derived from the word *soldada*, meaning soldier's pay.[45] During the period of Spanish conquest a *soldadera* was any person, female or male, who acted as servant for a soldier. These servants took the soldier's pay and used it to buy food and supplies. The title of *soldadera* may have come from the Spanish but the role of women as soldiers in warfare was part of tradition in Mesoamerica. By the time of the 1910 Revolution the lines between the two distinct roles had blurred, and almost all women involved with the military factions were called *soldaderas*.

The multifaceted definitions and roles of women who are defined as *soldaderas* makes identifying the figures in photographs and postwar art complicated. First and foremost the question of how to delineate which images and figures constitute *soldaderas* becomes a basic issue. It is prudent to consider, at least initially, any image of a woman that is set in a revolutionary scene. Images of war and violence would indicate that active individuals pictured were involved in the conflict but *soldaderas* are rarely shown in this manner. Neither are women commonly shown in uniform, especially in postwar art images.

[44] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military*, xii.
[45] Ibid.

The details of images become exceptionally important in this case. Symbolic objects that have become emblematic of the Revolution such as bandoliers and sombreros have been identified to indicate involvement. Weapons on the bodies of individuals are also indicative, but as discussed previously the term *soldadera* is not confined to soldiering. So while the presence of weapons, specifically rifles and ammunition, are some of the obvious symbols other commonly depicted objects and actions have been taken into account. The presence of trains, the portrayal of women following men with the accouterments of war, and the clothing they wear all give clues.[46] In many of these cases more than one of these symbols was needed to identify the women shown as revolutionaries or *soldaderas.* Images depicting women with weapons, in contact with male soldiers, or completing tasks related to the historical and stereotypical roles of *soldaderas* were considered.

I argue that current distinctions make it impossible to define what a *soldadera* is or does. Instead, evidence suggests that any woman involved with the military in any role from prostitute to soldier may have been named as such. Though it may initially seem more useful to demarcate the various roles into their own classifications that would ultimately ignore the pliable nature of the boundaries between them. Nevertheless the use of the term *soldadera* to describe women in the military necessarily distances them from being viewed as soldiers. This fed into the

[46] Trains are often pictured in Revolutionary imagery. They were the main way that forces travelled the country and moved supplies and were often pictured in photographs along with the troops. Additionally soldaderas are often shown with trains because in many cases they lived on the trains during the war.

view in the twentieth century of the women as merely bystanders who observed men's heroism in the Revolution and as "nuisances in the march toward modernity."[47] Because the term is so problematic especially in terms of women's agency it will be used in a constricted manner. In chapter one when referring to photographs of real women who are involved in this particular conflict they have been characterized as revolutionaries rather than described as *soldaderas*. In chapter two when referring to postwar art images representing women revolutionaries they are labeled *soldaderas.* For reasons that will become apparent later this determination was made chiefly because the symbolic nature of these images invokes the icon of the *soldadera* rather than real women.

Chapter one focuses on images of women revolutionaries in the context of photographs documenting the war that were sold as popular collectible items and published in the Mexican media during the conflict. The photographs that are a part of this study are all housed in the Casasola archive, which began as a collection of war photography taken by photojournalists, documentary photographers, and professional photographers. Chapter one will chiefly deconstruct portraits of women revolutionaries while investigating how the photograph as a "space of projection" offers itself as a location open to embellishment and mythologizing.[48] It will examine the role of photographs as objects of collective memory in the

[47] Jocelyn Olcott, Mary K Vaughan, and Cano, *Sex in revolution: gender, politics, and power in modern Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 22.
[48] Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (April 1, 2008): 117.

development of the *soldadera* into a revolutionary icon. Portraits make up a small but significant part of the image of women revolutionaries in the archive, presenting an alternate picture of women in the war – one that reflects an image that is partially constructed by the women themselves. Alternatively, while the photographs represent an individual-ness they simultaneously negate it, beginning an articulation of soldaderas as symbolic figures. The chapter will explore the layers of individuality and allegory in the portraits while examining how the approaches of documentary photography and portraiture act on the experience of viewing the images.

Chapter two investigates the image of *soldaderas* in revolutionary themed postwar graphic art in the 1940's as objects of postmemory. It will focus on the image of revolutionary women presented in a portfolio published by the artists' collective and print workshop El Taller de Gráfica Popular, titled *Estampas de la Revolución Méxicana*. The portfolio is described by its makers as representing a visual history of Mexico from the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz through the 1940's. The largest section of the portfolio is given to picturing the violent phase of the Revolution. As postmemorial objects the artworks function to create an absent connection to the traumatic past of the violent phase of the Revolution through fantasy, invention, and projection.[49] The chapter explores how the figure of the

[49] The ways that postmemory functions within the context of post-revolutionary artwork will be elaborated on in chapter two. For a deeper discussion on what scholar Marianne Hirsch calls postmemory and how it connects a generation to its un-experienced traumatic past see her works: "The Generation of Postmemory," *Poetics*

soldadera is broken into two main types: *la Adelita,* a woman romantically attached to a soldier, and *la Soldadera* and what each implies about women in the armies. Furthermore it will demonstrate how the image of *soldaderas* in the portfolio characterizes the women as poor, indigenous, caregivers, and women attached to particular men. The rendered identity and roles of the women represented are a reflection of the tension between political policies, social directives aimed at the modernization and industrialization of the country, and the reality of the lived experiences of its population, especially of its women.

The two chapters will demonstrate how images of women revolutionaries in the twentieth century were constructed around acceptable forms of feminine gender identity while simultaneously implicating class and race. Additionally they will show how the figure of the *soldadera* was built into an allegorical character through visual symbolism, content, and visual devices that position the individual women as emblematic of the masses, as well as the ways in which the materiality of the images aided in this construction. The chapters draw a connection between the claims of authenticity and transparency around the photographic medium as a whole, the documentary photographs from the war, and the later graphic work of the TGP. They additionally articulate how these claims are ultimately misleading and aid in the manipulation of the social position of the figure of revolutionary women, helping to create a new cultural memory around *soldaderas*.

Today 29, no. 1 (April 1, 2008): 103–128; and *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

Chapter One:

Portraits of Mexican Revolutionary Women: Subjects and Objects in the Casasola Archive

The photography of the 1910 Mexican Revolution made cultural icons out of Revolutionary figures. Documentary photographers and photojournalists took hundreds of thousands of photographs during the war. They captured images of battalions and military encampments, violence and death, the displacement of the population, battles, and soldiers. The various factions were comprised of individuals from all over the country, from every class, from both rural and urban areas. Men and women fought and played various supporting roles in the conflict. The photographs chosen historically to represent the war in many ways hide the vast differences of the revolutionaries and instead assert a history of "the great men of the Revolution." Despite the proliferation of images of the leaders their photographs are not the only images to have reached an emblematic status.

Images of women may make up a small portion of the photographic archive of the Revolution but they represent an important opportunity to see how images of women revolutionaries were constructed and used. A very few of these images are well known and are often called upon to represent the experience of women in the war. One photograph, an image of a woman commonly described as a *soldadera* on a train (Figure 5) has become an especially iconic photograph and has sparked an

intense interest in the women who were involved in the war.[1] This iconic photograph shows a young woman leaning and peering out from the open area of the train she rides on. Yet 'peering' is too soft a word for the expression on her face. It is intense, not just "a look" but a fierce looking. She wears a long dirty skirt and her hair is covered. The intensity in the woman's face invokes notions of strength and personality, but her clothing and lack of action exposes little about her role in the war. A description of the photograph of the woman on the train as an object that has reached iconicity can be found in multiple places and the proliferation of the image itself evidences this reading of it. In many ways this particular image has become a surrogate for the many women involved in the Mexican Revolution.

This image in particular is a fitting example of how photographs can easily become symbols of misleading narratives. Historian John Mraz investigates the origins of this photograph and how it became associated with *soldaderas* in his visual culture study *Looking for Mexico*.[2] He outlines the history of the image's association with *soldaderas* and more specifically with the character "Adelita," which did not occur until the 1980's. Adelita is a stereotypical feminine construction related to a revolutionary song in which the male singer describes a young beautiful woman who follows the troops out of romantic attachment and is idealized and loved by the soldiers and the narrator. Mraz goes on to argue that

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[1] Andrea Noble, *Images of Power: Iconography, Culture and the State in Latin America,* ed. Jen Andermann and William Rowe (Berghahn Books, 2006), 196.

[2] John Mraz, *Looking for Mexico: modern visual culture and national identity* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2009), 232-234.

based on her position on the train the woman was not likely part of the "rank and file" *soldaderas* who most often rode below or on top of trains, but was rather a food seller.[3] His assertion that she is a food seller is supported by the group that surrounds her in the original photograph, which is almost always cropped due in part to the original glass plate being broken to the right of the woman.

Mraz's argument suggests the lack of definitive parameters around who can or can't historically be considered a *soldadera,* by claiming that in being a food seller she is not a *soldadera.* This is despite the work of historians like Elizabeth Salas who have shown that selling food was one of the many original roles women played in the Mexican military. It also makes an excellent example of how photographs can act as screens, becoming sites of projected expectations.[4] In the cropped photograph the intensity exuded by this woman who is singled out has made her a "repository for, and symbol of, the attributes of the legendary *soldaderas*."[5] Despite the photographic archive holding varied images of women during the Revolution holding weapons and incorporated in the troops, this image of a woman who is likely a food seller has become the symbol for all women in the Revolution.

Historical literature on the conflict generally describes women who took part in the Revolution as camp followers and images will often associate them with male soldiers through physical touch (Figure 6). The use of the photographs in historical writings about the 1910 Mexican Revolution has been focused on utilizing the

[3] Ibid, 233. Also see Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military*, 43.
[4] Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 117.
[5] Mraz, *Looking for Mexico,* 233.

images as a form of historical evidence. This is problematic in that it takes for granted that the photographic image is representative of a historical truth in a transparent manner. Scholars like Elena Poniatowska and Elizabeth Salas have deepened historical understanding of women's involvement in the war through more focused research. Elizabeth Salas' work has investigated the origins of so-called *soldaderas* and their historical role in the Mexican Revolution.[6] Elena Poniatowska, a journalist and author, has collected and published a book of photographs of *soldaderas* from the Revolution.[7] She is one of the few authors to have approached photographs of women in the Revolution in an inclusive manner. Nevertheless, her work with the photographs is problematic because it takes an indexical approach that suggests in the repetitive use of images documenting their presence that there is proof of agency in the sheer numbers.[8] It does not acknowledge the complexity involved in the representations present in photographs. Cultural historian Andrea Noble explores and disputes the connection between photography, memory, and historical agency in her book *Photography and Memory in Mexico: Icons of Revolution*, 2011. In it she notes that while agency can be

[6] See Elizabeth Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military: myth and history* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990).

[7] See Elena Poniatowska and David Dorado Romo, *Las soldaderas: women of the Mexican Revolution* (El Paso: Cinco Puntos Press, 2006).

[8] Andrea Noble also discusses Poniatowska's use of the photographs of women revolutionaries in her book *Photography and Memory in Mexico: Icons of Revolution* (Manchester ; New York: Manchester University Press, 2011), 117.

> "visualized in photographic artifacts such as the images that appear in Poniatowska's collection… we cannot take the evidential force of such photographs of female subjects of the Revolution at face value."[9]

While women in the Revolution have become more visible in both academic work and popular culture there has been little in-depth investigation into the images that represent them. Neither have certain types of images, such as field portraits and documentary photographs, been examined.

The types of images proliferated and the medium's ability to simultaneously engender the impression of a genuine capturing of a subject and to act as a screen reflecting the viewer's, or a society's assumptions limit the ways in which we look and think about the images of women in the war. These assumptions reinforce what Noble has called the "state of woman as a site of alterity" hindering a discussion of agency.[10] This chapter will look at photographs of armed revolutionary women in a way that attempts to refuse the assumption of a gaze that inherently disenfranchises some bodies and to move away from merely documenting the women's presence in the war through photography. It will focus on how certain types of images, specifically portraits of revolutionary women taken in the context of documenting the Revolution, portrayed them concurrently as specific and symbolic figures. Rather than focusing on inserting more images of female revolutionaries into the scholarship it will investigate images that allow us to look at the historical narrative from a different angle. These photographic portraits support a much more unique

[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.

reading of individual women, one that pictures them as not by the sides of "their men" but as distinctive persons. In examining the portraits the screens that are implicit in the images will become more apparent, allowing for a more subtle investigation of how they effect the reading of the images.

The first section will examine how portraits present an image of self-constructed individuality that is lost in historical descriptions. Additionally it will demonstrate how the portraits contradict contemporaneous stereotypes surrounding revolutionary women and *soldaderas*. The second section will demonstrate how symbolic attributes in the portraits create a dual image that complicates the reading of individuality and layers allegory over the figures. The third section explores the intersection of these two experiences and how these factors create an aura of iconicity around the figure of the *soldadera*, rather than individual women.

Portraits in the Casasola Archive: Performing Individuality and Anonymity

In Mexico during the 1910 Revolution the contents of visual culture and popular photography turned starkly towards the everyday. As war became commonplace popular photography reflected the shift by focusing on peasants, soldiers, damaged cities, and masses of people. These images replaced the mélange of posed portraits reflecting bourgeois life and images of cliché folkloric stereotypes

popular before the Revolution.[11] The 1910 Revolution was the first war to be captured with a technologically advanced photography that made wide dissemination possible.[12] By 1910 the reflex camera had dramatically increased a photographers ability to take a photograph quickly and easily, and the popularity of images in newspapers and of formats like the postcard meant that the images were extensively circulated. Photographs of the violent phase of the Revolution have served manifold purposes politically and culturally both during the Revolution and in the years following it. Some of the photographs taken during the period were a direct means to a political end. Specifically, Zapata and Carranza finessed images not only to present themselves in powerful positions but also to represent their followers as emblematic of all the varied social classes and indigenous groups in Mexico.[13] After the period of war the photographs were called on and employed in the construction of a collective memory and a burgeoning national identity.[14] In the

[11] José Antonio Navarrete, "Del tipo al arquetipo: Fotografía y tipos nacionales en América Latina," Extra-Camara 21 (2003): 34. Beginning in the mid 19th century foreign photographers working in Mexico began portraying "popular types." These stereotypical constructions are argued to have had weighty ramifications for the growing national identity. The types are related to the earlier *costumbrismo* paintings. Photographic examples of the types are found in Cruces y Campas *tarjetas* of *Tipos Mexicano*s and the work of François Aubert. The images made by foreign photographers picturing the lower classes and poverty departed from the *costumbriso* genre in that they did not picture the poor and rural peoples as idyllically honorable.

[12] Mraz, *Looking for Mexico,* 14.

[13] Leonard Folgarait, *Seeing Mexico photographed: the work of Horne, Casasola, Modotti, and Álvarez Bravo* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2008), 25-26.

[14] See the work of Andrea Noble, Leonard Folgarait and Elizabeth Edwards for more on photography as a form of memory and the Casasola archive's function as a collective memory used to create national identity.

years following the Revolution the photographs were systematically collected into what is now known as the Casasola archive.

The archive was founded by the photojournalist Agustín Víctor Casasola and includes images taken by such acclaimed photographers as Hugo Brehme, Manuel Ramos and Guillermo Kahlo.[15] In addition to its more famous authors its contents are comprised of images made by obscure photographers, photojournalists and anonymous individuals. Casasola collected, commissioned, and shot images of the Revolution, many of which were published in contemporary newspapers and periodicals. The bourgeoning collection of images documenting the war was supplemented with portraits and images of the leaders of the Revolution. In the decades following the violent phase of the Revolution the photographs in the archive were used as historical evidence for the construction of a master narrative and history of Mexico's uprising.[16] Indeed, the Casasola archive has been convincingly argued to be one of the major instruments in the construction of Mexican national identity by scholars such as John Mraz, Andrea Noble and Leonard Folgarait.[17]

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[15] Sergio Raúl Arroyo, "*The Casasola Collection in the INAH National Photo Library,*" in *Mexico, the revolution and beyond: photographs by Augustín Victor Casasola, 1900-1940*, ed. Pete Hamill and Agustín Víctor Casasola (New York; Mexico City: Aperture ; CONCULTA-INAH, 2003), 11.

[16] Folgarait, *Seeing Mexico photographed*, 5-6.

[17] For a more in-depth investigation of how the Casasola archive has been used to construct national identity, especially through the use of the photographs as historical evidence see Leonard Folgarait, *Seeing Mexico photographed: the work of Horne, Casasola, Modotti, and Álvarez Bravo*; Andrea Noble, *Photography, Memory, and*

Images of the leaders presenting them as the "great men" of the Revolution, were incorporated into the narrative and used to assert that Mexico as a nation had been molded by powerful, individual men.[18] This has been linked especially to the photograph of *Villa en la Silla Presidencial* (Figure 7). The image, which in reality has at least four slightly differing versions, depicts Villa in the presidential chair with Zapata seated next to him. The moment occurred when the two commanders' troops occupied Mexico City in 1914 and has become a visual symbol of the Revolution as a whole.[19] There are also countless other images that feature Emiliano Zapata, Francisco "Pancho" Villa, Victoriano Huerta, and Francisco Madero in full-length posed portraits. The portraits starkly contrast with the overwhelming majority of anonymous images populated by soldiers, the dead, peasants and battle-damaged cities. The body of photographs is heterogeneous in theme and aesthetics particularly because it is a conglomerate of images taken by many different authors with many different goals. The images don't shy away from the horrific reality of war, often picturing executions and fields of dead bodies. They show streets full of sombreros, battles, transport trains, the U.S. army and insurgents posing with their rifles. The archive of images is chaotic in the way that war is chaotic. It doesn't show a single story of the war but presents the viewer with a multiplicity of narratives.

Disavowal: the Casasola Archive in *Iconography, Culture and State in Latin America*; and John Mraz, *Looking for Mexico*.

[18] Mraz, *Looking for Mexico*, 76.

[19] Noble, *Photography and Memory in Mexico*, 57-61.

Though the types of images and stories available in the archive are numerous the number of photographs conscripted to represent the Revolution have been carefully chosen and are often politically expedient. In the early 1940's the images were printed in the extremely influential *Historia gráfica de la revolución,* literally the graphic history of the Revolution.[20] The images were part of manufacturing both the institutionally supported history and the history in the popular imagination of the Revolution through the 1950's.[21] Photographs from the archive were subsequently published in children's history books, on the ten-peso bank note, on commercial items, and postage stamps.[22] They even infused the imagery of such renowned Mexican artists as Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and José Orozco Clemente, who used the images as starting points for their murals.[23] Even in the present day, published images of the Revolution are most likely to have come from the Casasola archive. In essence it has become the official home for images of the war.

Photographs of women are scattered throughout the archive. Portraits like this image of an armed revolutionary woman in front of a non-descript building (Figure 3a) show women in a similar context to the portraits of male officers. Though more often than not they present women in the role of lover, wife, or camp

[20] Carlos Monsiváis, "Notas sobre la historia de la fotografía en México," *Revista de la Universidad de México* (1981), 35.
[21] John Mason Hart, Review Essay of Thomas Benjamin, La Revolución: Mexico's Great Revolution as Memory, Myth, and History (University of Texas Press, 2000) *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 2 (2002).
[22] Noble, Photography and Memory in Mexico, 5-6.
[23]Ibid, 7.

follower. The perceived role of the women pictured, especially in the popularly visible images, is most often characterized in terms of their support. This description of *soldaderas* by Pete Hamill in his work with the Casasola archive is representative,

> "those valiant women who travelled with the contending armies, often fighting at the sides of their men, always providing food and warmth and other kinds of ammunition."[24]

While women are acknowledged as fighting when necessary, statements often qualify their actions. They are positioned as being "by the sides of their men," the ammunition they provide is "food and warmth." The focus is on what they provided to "their men." Despite the stereotypes surrounding revolutionary women images of them as soldiers are notably present.

Photographers documenting the war captured varied portraits of revolutionaries. Aside from the professional and politically motivated portraits of the leaders of the Revolution they also took portraits of individuals. The images range from more traditional portraits, where an individual is singled out and poses for the photograph, to candid shots that focus on a single person within a group. The more traditional portraits most often picture men above the rank of an infantry soldier (Figures 8 and 9), but they also feature female revolutionaries. Both the Zapatistas and Carrancistas are known to have employed photographers, which they

[24] Víctor Agustín Casasola and Pete Hamill, *Mexico, the revolution and beyond: photographs by Augustín Victor Casasola, 1900-1940* (New York; Mexico City: Aperture ; CONCULTA-INAH, 2003), 13.

brought along with them during military campaigns.[25] Their role was meant to be intentionally propagandistic but this access allowed the photographers more intimacy with the troops and the opportunity to make such portraits. Photographs taken by these individuals were sold to news outlets and printing shops in the major cities, and were also often printed by the photographers themselves and sold to members of the forces and tourists.

In previous decades portraits were commonly taken in studios and exchanged socially as calling cards in the form of *tarjetas de visita*. These objects were immensely fashionable and were popularly collected into albums and showcased in living rooms.[26] In addition to functioning as socially acceptable personal calling cards, studio portraiture was used as a way to catalogue and keep information about prostitutes in Mexico's Register of Public Women.[27] Within the documentary archive the portraits represent an opportunity to see how the women chose to characterize themselves within the context of war, in images they would have been aware might be printed and sold. This is significant in the context of women revolutionaries because their images have been used to construct an identity and purpose around them in order for them to fit into the narrative of the Revolution. This narrative presents them chiefly as selfless and traditionally feminine camp followers who accompany the troops for the purpose of fulfilling

[25] Mraz, *Looking for Mexico*, 61-63.
[26] Mraz, *Looking for Mexico,* 20. The previous sentence is also a summary from the same source.
[27] See Arturo Aguilar Ochoa, *La fotografía durante el Imperio de Maximiliano*, (UNAM, 1996), 87; and Mraz, *Looking for Mexico*, 21.

domestic duties and sexual needs. Stereotypical sentiments commonly expressed about women, and *soldaderas* specifically, during the Revolution were pervasive in Mexican society and the military apparatus. These opinions range from idealization, to vilification, to outright denial. The Villista lieutenant Nicholás Durán's comment is representative of the idealization of the women,

> "She [the soldadera] was an angel for the soldier; lighting his spirit so that he could reach victory because that meant the realization of the ideals of the Revolution and dignity for his sons and future generations."[28]

On the opposing side General Joaquín Amaro, accused them of being the "chief cause of vice, illness, crime and disorder" in the Mexican army.[29] Others claimed that the only involvement women had was bringing food from their homes to the troops.[30] None of these exaggerated descriptions gives any credence to the women as individuals or to their material contributions to the war. The photographs present an opportunity to see a more nuanced and individual representation of the women.

If documentary is mythicized as a format that reveals truth on a larger societal scale, portraits are imagined to reveal some essential quality about the person figured.[31] This portrait of a revolutionary women (Figure 3a & 3b) portrays a different narrative than that of having been an "angel for the soldier" or of having been a force destructive to the cohesiveness of the troops. The woman stands

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[28] Esther R. Perez, *Those years of the revolution, 1910-1920: Authentic bilingual life experiences as told by veterans of the war* (Aztlan Today Pub. Co, n.d.), 156.
[29] Lieuwen, *Mexican militarism*, 94.
[30] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military*, 45.
[31] Cynthia Freeland, "Portraits in Painting and Photography," *Philosophical Studies* 135, no. 1 (August 1, 2007): 98-100.

smiling and alone framed by a pale, damaged wall. Her long dark dress contrasts sharply with the background. Under the wide brimmed hat her hair is flowing and freshly brushed around her shoulders. She appears to be corseted and holds a pair of binoculars in her left hand. The binoculars are an interesting addition to her accessories. They are reminiscent of the nineteenth century vogue for "picturesque tourism" and the commercialized equipment one was encouraged to buy for such escapades, such as "optical devices."[32] This sort of tourism was the purview of wealthy and upper classes.

The resemblance to a wealthy tourist is abruptly shattered as the viewer's eye moves from the binoculars and realizes that what initially appeared to be a walking stick in the woman's right hand is a rifle propped against the ground. The binoculars take on a rather specified meaning at that moment, as an object related to the need of a soldier to keep watch for opposing forces and possibly for aiding in long-range shots. She is carrying a large amount of ammunition, with bandoliers strapped to her chest and wrapped around her waist. She wears a holstered pistol across her torso and has what appears to be a knife or dagger slung across her hip. What may have initially appeared as ruins behind her are really the bullet-pocked wall of some building. The plaster is giving way and falling off the bottom of the exterior of the wall while the remaining plaster is peppered with holes that may have come from gunfire. The door to the right of the woman is small and wooden,

[32] Ann Bermingham, *The Picturesque and ready-to-wear femininity*, in *The Politics of the picturesque: literature, landscape, and aesthetics since 1770*, Ed. Copley, Stephen and Peter Garside (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 86-87.

possibly a cellar door. The gaping hole above her head evidences artillery fire and the extreme violence of war.

The woman stands in front of a damaged building that provides details but little context. The note on the back of the postcard helps build a frame of reference for the image and the woman. Its only purpose seems to be to describe her while illustrating to a degree the woman's participation in the Revolution. The tone of the note suggests that whoever had this postcard in their possession knew the woman, at least superficially, and additionally provides some insight into the attitude of the author (Figure 3b). It reads:

> "Celebrated _ revolutionist. Señorita Ma Gonzales Garcia. Nearly full blooded Indian, but a dead game sport and good soldier. Notice the bullet marks in the adobe wall and shell hole above the scrappy lady's head! Jack"[33]

Señorita Gonzales Garcia appears to have readied her person for the photograph. In doing so she asserted control over her image, constructing to a degree the way she is perceived by others. The dress she wears for the photograph is different from the everyday and shabby clothing that images of women revolutionaries often depict. This is not clothing that is in line with the reality of warfare and troop movements. Photographs of the war tend to picture women and men, as they might be seen on the road (Figures 10 and 11). Travelling long distances and active battle result in revolutionaries' appearances often being captured as dirty and disheveled. This woman has paid careful attention to her

[33] The second written word, following "Celebrated" was not identifiable.

appearance, especially to her hair and to her weapons. The pistol strapped to her chest seems to have been situated into a position where is would be more visible rather than leaving it where it would be more accessible to draw.

In comparison to field portraits of commanders the purposeful display of the accouterments of war is noteworthy. The portraits of Comandante Barrañada and General Benjamin Argumedo (Figures 8 and 9) are both similarly taken in the field but do not go out of their way to show the weapons they carry. Neither are they pictured in clothing that gives the impression that they were concerned with their appearance in the images. They both wear clothing that looks to be well made but shabby and somewhat dirty. It appears to be everyday garb worn while on the move. Other images of well-known fighters like the rebel sharpshooter Romualdo Saeriz (Figure 12) do show a soldier who does not have the rank of officer dressed up in clothing meant for display. His bodily positioning is similar to Señorita Garcia and his pistol is evident but in an accessible position, though he has pushed his vest back to ensure its visibility. This suggests that visibility of weapons was important to soldiers in images meant for display, and that the woman considered it important enough to the image she was trying to present to make it observable at the expense of usability in the moment. When compared to posed portraits of Revolutionary military leaders like Emiliano Zapata the portrait of Señorita Gonzales Garcia shows a similar desire to display the objects of her labor. Zapata's portrait depicts a more symbolic persona meant for political gain whereas Garcia's portrait is a more

personal display, that is nonetheless political in its implications regarding gender and race.

There is a sense of duality in the image of the woman. On the one hand she is fairly bristling with weapons and stands in front of a wall covered in the remains of gunfire. On the other she is smiling, wearing a dress and a corset, with her hair carefully placed around her. She performs both her femininity and her position as a soldier through the production of her appearance, the objects on her body, and her position in front of wall riddled with bullet holes. She expresses her femininity in a traditional way, wearing a corset and dressed in clothing that would not be worn for active fighting. The corset presents her as a respectable middle-class woman in terms of Victorian social values, which were still part of Mexico's social vocabulary at the time of the war.[34] It also physically constricts her body, her ability to move well, and thus in the context of the Revolution, fight. The image of a corseted female revolutionary also signifies in a larger way the repression of women's roles in society. At the same time to suggest that the woman wearing a corset in this photograph is only an articulation of oppression is too limited. The woman is working within existing social ideals of beauty and expresses her physical sexuality through approved social means. The woman's long hair worn down also has significance. Societal norms required adult women to wear their hair up and bound,

[34] Leigh Summers, *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset* (Oxford; New York: Berg 3PL, 2001), 2.

wearing it down denoted amorality and untamed sexuality.[35] Through the combination of the hair, the dress and the corset the woman presents herself as simultaneously respectable and sexually suggestive. The clothing also signifies social class and degree of wealth. The well-made dress, the corset, and the multiple weapons on her body represent a degree of economic means.

Her emotional disposition in the image diverges distinctly from one of the most prevalent stereotypes, which marks the female revolutionary as miserable. The lieutenant Durán evidences this sentiment noting, "she (the *soldadera*) was the soul of the Revolution because she dedicated all her will to suffering."[36] Idealized descriptions such as this one portray the women as dedicated to enduring pain and hardship for their men. The trope of suffering was also attributed to revolutionary women through race, photographs, and subsequent representation in art. Images of camp followers in the archive depict the women in a state of abject poverty (Figure 13). As previously mentioned soldaderas were largely from the peasant class, which was associated with indigenousness. Señorita Garcia Gonzales is additionally named as Indian in her description on the back of the postcard.

In early twentieth-century Mexico the typified figure of the "Indian" was characterized as being intrinsically melancholy.[37] It figured the indigenous groups

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[35] Elisabeth G. Gitter, "The Power of Women's Hair in the Victorian Imagination," *PMLA* 99, no. 5 (October 1, 1984): 936–954.

[36] Perez, *Those years of the revolution,* 156.

[37] Tace Hedrick, *Mestizo modernism: race, nation, and identity in Latin American culture, 1900-1940* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 16. The melancholy character of Indians was theorized as being tied to centuries of oppression.

of Mexico as stuck in poverty and "victims of history," further connecting the groups with the lower classes.[38] The typecast was used by political leaders following the Revolution as evidence of their being cemented in the past and inability to enter the modern world.[39] Images of women revolutionaries and *soldaderas* in the famous Mexican murals visually characterize them as melancholy and suffering figures. Images of women seem to take the brunt of demonstrating the reality of the brutal effects of the Revolution on the general population of Mexico. Orozco especially utilizes this trope. His graphic series "Horrors of the Revolution" depicted *soldaderas* as tragic and desolate women, heavy with pregnancy and following after depressed men (Figure 14). The portrait of Señorita Gonzales Garcia, who is described as "nearly full blooded Indian" contradicts the stereotypes of poverty and the melancholy Indian.

Garcia exhibits no sense of suffering in the photograph. She smiles and looks straight at the camera. Women joined the Revolution for many reasons and though the reality of the war was harsh and dangerous it does not necessarily imply an experience of desperation. Contemporaneous witnesses of the war like Maud Kenyon-Kingdon commented on women joining the troops out of a desire to leave behind their daily lives. She noted that,

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[38] Roger Bartra, "Paradise Subverted: The Invention of Mexican Character," in *Primitivism and Identity in Latin America: Essays on Art, Literature, and Culture,* ed. Erik Camayd-Freixas and José Eduardo González (University of Arizona Press, 2000), 6.

[39] Hedrick, *Mestizo modernism,* 16.

> "…lying in direct route of the soldiers' march, there was found a class of women with the inordinate love of wanderlust; who joined the rank and file of these soldiers of misfortune and proceeded onward with them."[40]

Being on the march with military troops also represented a way that women may have been able to remain independent in socio-political terms. Single adult women in Mexico were afforded almost the same civil rights as adult Mexican men with the establishment of the 1884 Civil Code.[41] Conversely when a woman married she lost almost all of these rights and was considered essentially an "'imbecilitas sexus' an imbecile by reason of sex."[42] All of these factors suggest that women may have chosen to fight or follow the troops in order to take some control over lives that were socially circumscribed, in addition to ideological and political reasons.

Garcia presents an image of a woman who is not only in her position by choice but is thriving in the conditions of war which could be particularly dangerous for women in ways that had nothing to do with battle. The artillery shell hole above the woman's head symbolically articulates the violence and trauma of the conflict. Though some women chose to participate with the troops others were abducted, raped, and forced into service either as camp followers or prostitutes.[43] Women who were kidnapped and raped found that their social standing along with their

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[40] Maud Kenyon-Kingdon, From Out of the Dark Shadows (San Diego, Calif.: Press of Frye and Smith, 1925), 51.

[41] Anna Macías, *Against all odds: the feminist movement in Mexico to 1940* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 13. These rights did not include the right to vote.

[42] Ibid. See the first chapter of *Against All Odds* for a more thorough description of women's civil rights in Mexico up to the Revolution.

[43] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military,* 39.

bodies had been violated. In the aftermath it was the brutalized women whose social reputations were permanently damaged.[44]

The details of the woman's image tell a story that is contradictory to the common stereotypes of *soldaderas*. She is neither poverty-stricken nor depressed. She narrates her subjectivity through the details of her person and presents herself alone, as an individual and a woman. She constructs an image of her persona as both respectable and sexually suggestive by contemporaneous social standards. Delineating individuality is a complicated matter and a person's expression through outward symbols is only part of the issue. Expectations wrought by cultural norms project screens onto images that alter the reading of what is visible as well as what is not visible. In the case of women revolutionaries it is useful to compare their images to similar photographs of men revolutionaries.

Like Garcia, General Benjamin Argumedo and Comandante Barrañada are both photographed alone and cognizant of the camera (Figures 8 and 9). Their names and ranks have been inscribed on the image before printing. Though higher-ranking men were more commonly singled out for portraits they were by no means the only ones. The photograph of Romualdo Saeriz, nicknamed in his portrait "crack shot of Mexico" presents an image of a man whose rank is not delineated but is still named (Figure 12). Garcia's name is only known because the owner of the postcard wrote it on the back. The lack of identification could be related to the lower status or rank of this woman in the troops she is associated with but it is a noticeable

[44] Ibid, 44.

difference that follows a pattern in the archive. While the name of an individual is not important in and of itself, the act of choosing to identify the men in the images but not the women is. It operates to take away a sense of individuality purposely ascribed to the men. Anonymity begets an experience of viewing that causes the individual pictured to be seen as representative of the many.[45] The condition of being unidentified in the majority of the photographs allows for images of individual revolutionary women to become more symbolic. This becomes especially apparent in relation to the fact that the men are specified as individuals, people whose names are important for the contemporaneous audience to know. The anonymity in the photographs encourages images of unidentified women to simultaneously become individual portraits and emblematic images.

Symbols of the Revolution: The Soldadera and the Sombrero

There is undeniably a connection between the content of photographs and the cultural conditions of the historical moment captured. Yet, meaning is not transparently constructed.[46] Artist and cultural critic Martha Rosler argues "against the possibility of a non-ideological [photographic] aesthetic," further stating that "any response to an image is inevitably rooted in social knowledge."[47] In this context portraits of revolutionary women project multiple images, going beyond

[45] Folgarait, *Seeing Mexico photographed* 17.
[46] Ibid, 3.
[47] Martha Rosler, *3 works* (Halifax, N.S.: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 2006), 76.

mere portraiture. The ways in which the content and details of a photograph create a narrative in the mind of a viewer is a critical factor, as is the screen projected on the image by the viewer. The production of the content in this photograph of a Zapatista creates several images competing for psychological dominance (Figure 15a and 15b).

The photographer has singled out this revolutionary and taken a striking portrait of the woman apart from the contingent she is associated with. She is posed in a rather simple manner, standing straight and staring intently at the camera with a serious, even stern expression. It is full-length and framed closely around her body. The dynamic lines of the rail tracks constantly refocus the eye on the woman. Her chest is crossed with bandoliers and she holds a flag and a sword. The photograph places her in the center of train tracks. The train was a common backdrop for images of the Revolution and photographs in the Casasola Archive. They were extremely important to the Revolution because they were one of the main ways troops and supplies were transported around the country.

The inscribed title "Una Zapatista" in the lower left corner denotes the woman's allegiance to Emiliano Zapata's forces. Written above "Una Zapatista" is the name Garduño. The last name suggests that the author is photojournalist Antonio Garduño who started his career in Mexico City during the early years of the Revolution. Below the name the words FOT MEX are written in block lettering, denoting the news agency that published this photograph. These inscriptions appear to have been written on the negative. The other written notes, "Una

Zapatista" and "no 465," do not appear to have been written at the same time. They are much brighter and clearer, though they are part of the printed image. This may mean that the title ascribed to the woman was not written by Garduño but by some later print shop to which the image was sold to for further production.

The possible discrepancy between the title inscribed on the image and the photographer could bring into question the verity of the description of the woman as a Zapatista. However the woman's clothing, the sombrero, and the bandoliers are in line with descriptions of Zapatistas who were largely poor workers from rural areas.[48] Additionally the Zapatistas are known to have had one of the larger contingents of women in their ranks.[49] Positioning her as a Zapatista has larger societal connotations that relate to issues of class and race. Zapata was known for his troops being heavily outfitted by *campesinos*, a term referring to peasants or people who live in rural areas who were largely of indigenous descent.

The portrait pictures a woman wearing what would have been considered masculine clothing, carrying weapons, and staring defiantly at the camera. The boots and garb she wears are worn and dirty. Her hair is unkempt and stuffed into the ever iconic sombrero – an item of clothing that became a symbol of the Revolution, and often worn by Zapata himself. The details of her clothing and weapons build a persona around the woman. The approach of portraiture implies a

[48] Mary Theresa Avila, "Chronicles of Revolution and Nation," 270. For a first hand description of the Zapatista army see *Tempest Over Mexico* by Rosa E. King,
[49] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military*, 39.

more intimate connection with the individual being pictured than the reflection of her physicality. Especially with photography the necessity of fashioning a credible likeness is secondary. Likeness as it relates to images and in this case portraits, is a function of recreating what one sees in such a way as to allow recognition to occur for the viewer. Manufacturing likeness in certain genres of handmade images is important in order for the viewer to recognize a person or an object and is traditionally related to the technical ability of the artist.

Likeness in the photographic image does not rely on an artist's technical ability, as it is the result of a mechanical action. The mechanical nature of the captured image recreates a likeness, though that is not to say that the likeness creates transparent meaning or is equivalent with reality. Reality is also a slippery concept and I would argue that it cannot be recreated in an image or otherwise. What is meant here by "reality" is that the interpretation of a photographic situation requires context, something that is often unconsciously constructed by the viewer rather than the image. The illusion of transparency through mechanical reproduction can create a problematic extension of this perceived transparency of meaning. However the image resulting from the mechanical operation of photography cannot make visible social tensions or subjectivity, it can only picture

what is already seeable.[50] What becomes more important in the making of a photographic portrait is the expression of subjectivity.[51]

Around 1912 the Harvard professor and philosopher George Santayana presented a paper describing photographic portraiture as a way to hold onto images that "we most dislike to lose," specifically images of familiar faces.[52] Portraiture in the context of documentary photography does not function in quite this way. Rather than a function of individual or familial memory they become objects of cultural or national collective memory because of their dissemination and the anonymity of many of the subjects. The faces may be familiar to an audience, or the photographer, or they may not be. In some instances the importance is not focused on the individual but rather on their relationship as subjects to an event and a society. The approach distances the person pictured from their individuality. It allows for the individual to stand in for the many and in effect creates a second image that is more symbolic than realistic. The lack of personal identification discussed earlier only furthers this function.

The objects the woman holds and the clothing she wears also construct another image around the woman and further undergird the symbolic aspects of the content. Some of the details in the photograph are politically significant and have

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[50] Paula Rabinowitz, "Voyeurism and Class Consciousness: James Agee and Walker Evans, 'Let Us Now Praise Famous Men,'" *Cultural Critique*, no. 21 (1992): 147.

[51] Cynthia Freeland, "Portraits in Painting and Photography," *Philosophical Studies* 135, no. 1 (August 1, 2007): 103.

[52] Vicki Goldberg, *Photography in Print: Writings from 1816 to the Present* (UNM Press, 1981), 260.

precedent in earlier works of art. In her right hand she grasps a sword and in her left a Mexican flag. While she has ammunition conspicuously strapped to her chest she has no rifle, though a pistol may be hidden under her jacket. Rather than actual weapons that would be used in modern battle she holds the accouterments of a more symbolic state of warfare and nationhood. These props create an overtly constructed overtone in the photograph. The stage is being set, so to speak, through the objects as well as the physical separation of her person from the group she must be travelling with. Her location in the center of the train tracks is not a natural place to stop and stand, suggesting the position is as intentional as her props.

The flag and the sword she carries reference paintings of the landing of Christopher Columbus in the Americas in which he claims the land as property of the Spanish crown, for example John Vanderlyn's, *Landing of Columbus*, 1847 (Figure 16). The painting visually narrates Columbus' landing in the New World, depicting him lifting the Spanish flag triumphantly in his left hand. In his right hand the tip of his sword just grazes the land, symbolically claiming it at sword point for Spain. In the painting of Columbus the sword and flag represent a victory over what was considered an untamed and fertile land. A victory that would be a new supply of wealth for Europe as well as the beginning of a bloody and cruel subjugation of the people who lived on that land. In the photograph of "Una Zapatista" the flag and sword are likewise objects symbolic to the 1910 Mexican Revolution.

The flag in the woman's left hand is a commonplace symbol representing the Mexican nation. This is of particular interest here because Mexico as a nation has

been argued to have not existed in tangible way prior to the Revolution.[53] Meaning that the many and varied people living in what is now geopolitically Mexico did not understand themselves to be "Mexican" during the government rule of Porfirio Díaz.[54] The dictatorship left large swaths of land and the population in extreme poverty while modernizing only specified areas.[55] The Revolution was viewed as a catalyst in coalescing the population and creating national identity. The sword in the woman's right hand is symbolic of warfare and righteous protection. Christian religious paintings picturing the archangel Michael often depict him holding a sword (Figure 17). In the New Testament Michael is the leader of heaven's armies and he defeats Satan's armies in battle.

Beyond religious imagery the sword represents warfare, but it is a symbol of an earlier era. The dominant weapon most commonly used during the Revolution was a gun. Swords did appear in photographs of the Revolution but almost exclusively in images of the leaders in full regalia. In those images the sword is part of a costume worn to present the wearer as a professional soldier, someone with political authority. Emiliano Zapata used such a costume in photographs that he would utilize as propaganda.[56] The photograph of the soldadera visualizes the woman as holding the symbolic objects of the conquest of Mexico, objects that also

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[53]Folgarait, *Seeing Mexico photographed*, 9-10. Also see Hector Aguilar Camin and Lorenzo Meyer, *In the Shadow of the Mexican Revolution: Contemporary Mexican History, 1910-1989*.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Mraz, *Looking for Mexico, 69.*

connote political and moral authority. In this context the image could be read allegorically as a new claiming of the land by the Mexican people, a taking back of the nation from the conquest of Spain.

Gender in this case is also a factor carrying specific connotations. The image of a woman carrying these symbolic objects carries references to French Revolutionary painting. For example Eugéne Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (Figure 18), in which liberty is figured as a woman carrying a flag and a bayonet. Liberty as an allegorical figure is commonly rendered as female. The gendered construction of the personification of liberty is theorized to have originated out of the grammatical structure of the word itself in Latin and Greek.[57] In the French painting Liberty is pictured wearing a 'Phrygian cap,' a symbol of the 1830 revolution in France. Similarly the Mexican revolutionary woman wears a sombrero, which was a symbol of the class uprising and the Zapatistas in Mexico. His troops, referred to as his *campesinos*, commonly wore sombreros. The sombrero was an agricultural workers hat, worn while laboring outdoors. Through this association the sombrero became a symbol for the uprising of the people at large and the lower classes especially, and as such held a certain status in the constructed picture of the Revolution as a popular agrarian revolution. The hat has been pushed back on her head to show her face more clearly. It also makes her hair

[57] Suzanne Romaine, *Communicating Gender* (Mahwah, N.J.: Psychology Press, 1998), 79. The grammatical structure of the word 'liberty' in Latin and Greek is a feminine form.

stuffed under the hat more visible, both of which underline her femininity despite the masculine clothing.

These manipulations of the manner in which the woman is represented underlines that the image is not "straight photography," a simple recording of events. The layered symbols and associations make more present the intentionality of the image. Considerable and obvious intentional manipulation of one's appearance in photographs of revolutionaries is not particularly common except in the case of the well-known leaders. A classic example is Hugo Brehme's 1911 photograph of Emiliano Zapata in the city of Cuernavaca (Figure 19). The two photographs – that of Zapata and "Una Zapatista" are similar to such a degree that it merits a closer examination. The dichotomy of the "Great Men" of the Revolution and the controversial female soldiers and camp followers being represented in such a similar fashion makes for a compelling comparison.

Emiliano Zapata is standing in a three quarter turn towards the camera, with his face and one foot twisted to point directly at the viewer. His expression is direct and proud, bordering on swaggering. His left arm is bent to grasp the hilt of his sword while the right is uplifted to clearly display his rifle. His stance is tense and controlled. His posture is also reminiscent of European paintings of royalty, in particular that of Louis XIV by Hyacinthe Rigaud (Figure 20). In Rigaud's famous portrait of the French monarch detail is exceptionally important, from his expression down to the buckles on his shoes. The portrait is a political statement, an expression of the power that he holds. It is meant to visually reinforce his

political strength, in the portrait the image of Louis XIV is meant to embody the state. The portrait of Zapata is equally concerned with detail and the personification of political and personal power.

Zapata is wearing a suit, polished boots, an elegantly crafted sombrero and carefully placed bandoliers. He portrays himself not merely as a soldier but an authority. Overall the photograph presents a sense of control. Zapata was cognizant of how crucial his image was in creating positive propaganda around his person and goals. Brehme was a savvy choice of photographer for Zapata in creating a more secure reputation. His work was popular and he had an established international audience making it more likely that a larger public, beyond Mexico's media, might see the photograph. In fact Zapata was wary of the press in Mexico, as this and other images of his person were most often used to vilify him as vicious and barbaric.[58] Photographs in the archive often linked images of death with Zapata and Francisco "Pancho" Villa especially (Figure 21).

His clothing is also telling, he is not wearing battle worn garments but a polished suit. The sash resting across his body is tricolored denoting the rank of General. The sword he holds is of particular interest in the context of the historical moment. It was a symbol of the governance of the city of Cuernavaca and had recently been in the control of the Maderista Manuel Asúnsolo, as proof of Madero's

[58] Mraz, *Looking for Mexico*, 69. Information regarding Zapata's relationship with the Mexican press from the Masters Thesis of Ariel Arnal Lorenzo, which was unavailable for review. The sentence preceding the noted one is also a summarization from this source. Arnal Lorenzo, Ariel. "Fotografía del zapatismo en la prensa de la Ciudad de México, 1910-1915," M.A. Thesis, Universidad Iberoamericana, 2002.

control of the city and the state of Morelos. Though, as historian John Mraz notes the fact of physically having the sword and sash did not mean that Zapata was in control of the city in reality, as Asúnsolo retained dominion over Cuernavaca.[59] Taken together the totality of his constructed appearance is an attempt at proving through the evidence of the photographic image that he is not a savage insurgent from the peasant class, but a professional, decorated General. In effect, this image of Zapata is a performance meant to shape expectations around his public reputation.

In contrast I would suggest that two operations occur in the photograph of the woman/*soldadera*. First, that preconceived notions surrounding women soldiers and women in images effect the experience of viewing the photograph. Secondly, that a portion of those expectations are counteracted by certain aspects of the woman's demeanor that alter the experience of viewing it. Zapata's image is intentionally and overtly self-constructed. His portrait takes advantage of previously established visual devices to establish himself as a professional soldier, and as having geo-political authority. Zapata is attempting to shape how the public will think about him, positioning himself as a powerful and politically important figure. He is also taking advantage of the fact that his face, reputation, and role in the war were already notorious. The image of the *soldadera* is just as constructed, but with a purpose that is less clear.

[59] Ibid.

The props in the portrait, more than her clothing or physical appearance, do suggest that the image was composed in a similar way to the portrait of Zapata. Where Zapata takes advantage of preexisting visual devices the props in the portrait of the anonymous woman do not benefit her as an individual. Rather her individuality is effected by the tradition of positioning women as allegorical figures in the context of war. As with the previous image the details are vital. The image does not invest in imbuing the woman as an individual, with power in a political or public sense. As already established, the sword and the flag hold distinct connotations in art, particularly in paintings of the conquest of Mexico. Additionally the sombrero is a consequential item of clothing, visually tying her directly to Zapata's forces, and thus to the characterization of the Revolution as an uprising of the people, the peasants of Mexico. The symbolic accouterments position the woman as allegorical in multiple ways. The portrait doesn't give a great amount of detail about the young woman as an individual. She is all symbol and exterior, her character resists an experience of the interiority of the woman underneath. She is positioned as representative of the many, conflated with female images of liberty, and carries objects that relate to images of the conquest of Mexico. The position of the woman as an individual soldier constantly competes with her image as an allegorical figure.

On the other hand aspects of the portrait push back at the image's slippage into allegory. The shift into allegory is counteracted through the interaction between the subject and the viewer. The image of the woman confronts and defies

the performance of her symbolic character. In Zapata's portrait he is self-consciously posed in a manner that allows for associations between him and notions of military and political power. The woman is not posed in such an overt way. She stands with her entire body facing the camera frontally, and only loosely grips the sword and flag, holding them casually near her body. Her body language gives the appearance that she is not overly concerned with what she is holding. Zapata's stare is aloof compared to the directness of the *soldadera's* flat, unwavering confrontation of the camera.

There is something compelling about the face, the gaze, of this young woman. Art historian Paula Rabinowitz has described the experience of viewing photographs as "both a transgressive and comfortable act," but that quality is refused here.[60] If the camera is "looking" at her, she is certainly looking back. The woman's engagement in returning the gaze of the camera, and thus the viewer, operates as a denial of access to her inner-self while simultaneously asserting her person. The viewer still *sees* the woman first and foremost.

Photographic theory often draws a line between the spectator and the referent and attributes the viewer with a degree of power over the subject being looked at. Gender is especially relevant in this theorized relationship because the balance of social power that is already skewed away from women is further depleted when a viewer can look unhindered without a chance of rebuke. This

[60] Rabinowitz, "Voyeurism and Class Consciousness," 143.

image thwarts the sense of separation between the two sides and tries to establish a relationship between them. The effect of this woman "looking back" at you counteracts any sense of the control that the viewer is attributed with. The voyeuristic quality is negated by her gaze as is the comfort with which one's eyes might roam over the body of this woman. This occurs because every time you cross her face her glare captures your attention and leaves the viewer feeling as if she is aware of your "looking." It is impolite to stare, we are socially conditioned to feel this and the moment the viewer encounters her opposing stare the power of looking unimpeded is stymied. Zapata invites the viewer to look, the photograph is made to be looked at and it would seem be admired. In the portrait the woman does not invite looking, rather in a base manner the portrait of the *soldadera* invites looking simply because of its medium – photographs are made to be looked at. Of course it invites looking for many other reasons as well - historical issues, content, gender and race all play into the ways that looking is solicited. The medium along with other cultural conditions work in tandem to present this woman as a figure that can easily be made into an allegorical character. A persona that is emblematic of the Revolution as a struggle for the liberty of Mexico and its people, both from the oppressive regime of Díaz and the cultural aftermath of the conquest. In this case the assertion of her person hinders the ability of the viewer to read the image as a sum of its symbolic parts. It encourages the image to be read as a portrait of this individual, if anonymous, soldier.

In reference to the agency asserted in portraits within the photographic archive of the Revolution, Zapata has been figured as having a larger degree of control over how his image was constructed. Any control he may have had in the initial manufacturing was not easily maintained. Indeed it is deceptive to suggest that Zapata or any of the leaders who attempted to fashion their political or popular identity through photography really had any more control of their image than anyone else once the images were sold. In many ways the agency of the photograph was transferred to whoever had the ability to publish it and manipulate the story around it. For example, this photograph of Zapata was not published until years after it was taken. Following its belated publication it was used to attack him, as were other popular images of him and Villa.[61]

Iconicity

In the beginning of this chapter images of the leaders of the Revolution as well as images such as the *soldadera* on the train were described as iconic. As art historian Andrea Noble has pointed out iconicity is not a simple concept to define. It can operate in a metonymic function, in which a component of the whole is substituted and allowed to stand in for something else. Iconicity may also function as a manifestation of characteristics in an allegorical manner.[62] Yet this doesn't fully describe what an icon or iconic image is or does in the context of photography.

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[61] Mraz. *Looking for Mexico*. 68-69.

[62] Noble, *Photography and Memory in Mexico,* 7-8. The prior sentence is also a summary of the same source.

Iconic photographs must have a rhetorical power, part of which lies in its ability to mobilize an emotional response which "bonds an audience, artistic practice, representational object, and social context affectively."[63] The photograph of the "*soldadera"* on the train can be described as iconic, but more importantly it is the abstracted image of women in the war that is made iconic. The rhetorical power of the image of soldaderas in the popular imagination is demonstrated in instances of women not associated with the Mexican army performing the image of female revolutionary.

In the face of high illiteracy rates visual documentation of the Revolution represented a seemingly factual way for the general public to track the conflict. The press in Mexico closely followed the war and published photographs documenting it in penny presses, newsreels, illustrated magazines, and documentary compilations.[64] Photographs from the war were also printed on the front of postcards in Mexico which gave the public easy and inexpensive access to war photography in a collectible format. Images from border areas between the United States and Mexico give some clues about the prominence of war photography and how it shaped the profiles of revolutionaries in the popular imagination.[65] These

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[63] Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago Ill.: University Of Chicago Press, 2011), 36.

[64] Mraz, *Looking for Mexico,* 61.

[65] While the visual documentation of the conflict in the Mexican media and how it compares to the images I analyze merits serious consideration I was unable to access Mexican publications from the Revolutionary period during the process of this study.

areas experienced a great deal of traffic from battles that spilled over national lines and from the tourists who gathered along the border to watch them.

This photograph of a group of Red Cross employees pictures a portion of a crowd gathered on a rocky hill (Figure 22). There are over 15 individuals within the frame though there appears to be more individuals beyond it. The group is a collection of multiple smaller gatherings rather than a single collective. Some men resembling both American and Mexican soldiers lounge in the foreground, including one wearing a tattered sombrero. In the background a group of partially visible men, children, and women, possibly 'tourists' perch on rocks watching the battle. The main group in the foreground includes five presumably American women in the odd position of wearing bandoliers and holding rifles. The women are smiling, dressed up, and posing for the photo while a few men laughingly look on. The words "Red Cross" and the name D W Hoffman along with the number 15 are written in the lower left corner of the image.

The El Paso chapter of the Red Cross is documented to have aided train cars going into and returning from Mexico for the American troops in 1915. The Red Cross was first instituted in 1911 after two doctors brought a white flag attached to a stick across the border to help the wounded after the battle in Juarez.[66] The white flag being held up in the photograph may represent a sort of reenactment of that incident – as well as conveying the message to any actively fighting soldiers that

[66] http://www.redcross.org/tx/el-paso/about. The official Red Cross website includes brief histories of its chapters. Both the 1911 incident and the 1915 incident are well known and documented.

they were there to give medical assistance. The contents of the image and its caption suggest that this photograph was taken in El Paso at the border. The people in the background may then be examples of the groups that would come to watch the battles in Juarez as if they were an entertainment.[67] Two of the women holding rifles are dressed in the same fairly simple clothing suggesting that they are in a uniform and part of the Red Cross team, the other three women are comparatively formal, wearing elaborately decorated hats and detail conscious clothing. They all wear a single strap of ammunition across their torsos and hold rifles while looking provocatively at the camera. One woman has her rifle up and is sighting towards the camera. The man directly to the left of the group is turned towards them and appears to be laughing.

I contend that this photograph depicts American women play-acting at being *soldaderas* for the camera. The bandoliers, rifles, and a carefully positioned pistol in the case of the woman in the center are symbols of the Revolution and its participants. The likely context of the aid organization at the Juarez-El Paso border, an area that saw a high volume of fighting, and the bandaged and armed men in the

[67] The Mexican Revolution was in many ways treated like a spectacle meant for entertainment by Americans along the border with groups of men, women and children setting up viewing parties just over the American border. There are a multitude of first hand accounts of large groups of people watching battles from American land and then flowing across the border afterwards to 'visit' the cities that the battle took place. In Juarez following a battle in which Madero took control of the city it was recorded that some 10,000 people from El Paso visited for the day. Another story related by a resident of El Paso in an interview describes people standing and watching the battles in dangerous positions, and describes a little boy being shot while watching and later dying.

foreground indicate that the persons photographed are near a battle zone. This photograph is significant because it suggests that at least in American minds the figure of the female revolutionary had moved beyond being attached to real, individual women and become iconic enough to be performed.

This performance of "being *soldaderas*" is executed with a powerful sense of amusement which seems at odds with the grave actuality of war that is very likely within visible distance from this group. Even if a battle were not visible or ongoing, as members of the Red Cross - a charity that attended to the needs of injured Mexican soldiers, they would have been acquainted with the seriousness of battle. I don't mean to argue that the attitudes presented here are unconditionally negative. The photograph likely pictures many competing perspectives, and the act of dressing up is not always tied to a condescending humor. It can also indicate envy, fantasy or a great deal of other emotions or desires. Perhaps the proud stance of some of the women suggests that they viewed the Mexican female soldiers as being brave and worthy of a degree of idolization. However, the very fact that they would choose to masquerade as Mexican women revolutionaries/*soldaderas* and have their picture taken is provocative. At the very least it makes an argument that the women had entered the imaginations of people along the border between Mexico and the United States and become objects of fantasy.

Photography and the proliferation of postcards with images of the war played a large role in expanding American awareness about women in the Mexican military. American military encounters with various Mexican troops increased that

awareness into something more negative. Border states especially experienced these interactions with Mexican troops, often resulting in public hostility. When a large force of *federales* was interred at Fort Bliss in Texas it included a recorded 1,256 *soldaderas*.[68] When the army called upon the public to donate clothing for the women in particular there was some intense opposition from locals in El Paso. The El Paso Morning Times society editor, Julia Sharp, argued that *soldaderas* did not deserve the pity or donated clothing of the American people, accusing *soldaderas* of finding pleasure in following the army, and further noting that "what would be death to an American woman is an appetizer to the class of Mexican woman found at Ft. Bliss."[69] She goes on to characterize them as distinctly different from the "deserving poor" Americans in El Paso.[70] This harsh reaction to Mexican women strongly implicates class, morality, and the belief that a degree of perversity was associated with their status while ignoring their position as soldiers in the military factions.

The divorcing of the recognition of female revolutionaries as soldiers is also performed to a degree in the portraits. This may simply be a byproduct of the approach of portraiture but it is not reliably the case in portraits of male soldiers. For example the portraits of these soldiers depict them in situations in which they act out the use of, or the readiness to use weapons (Figures 23 and 24). They are

[68] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military*, 53.
[69] Ibid, 63. These quotes from Julia Sharp are noted as being in the El Paso Morning Times on January 23, 1914 and February 4, 1914 by Salas.
[70] Ibid.

also positioned in the context of the military, not just war, through dress or surroundings. The two previously discussed photographs of women revolutionaries both present individual women as contextually in the war but apart the professional military troops. The separation functions to symbolically distance the women from the troops and battle. Even women who were well known in their factions, if not in the whole of the country, for their role in the war were distanced from their military actions in photographs.

In this photograph María Zavala, who was associated with the Huerta rebellion, is pictured sitting somberly on railway tracks (Figure 4). She wears masculine clothing and carries no visible weapons. Instead she holds plants and herbs loosely clutched to her chest. Her legs are folded under her body and she gazes introspectively down and to her left. This image can be found in a book published in accordance with the INAH who currently holds the Casasola Archive, titled *Mexico: The Revolution and Beyond*, 2005. The book illustrates the Casasola archive with over two hundred pages of photographs. The caption below the image of Zavala describes her as being "nicknamed *La Destroyer*" and "famous for helping those who had fallen in battle to die a more rapid and less painful death."[71] It leaves out that she was called *La Destroyer* not for quickening death but because she was famous for blowing up trains during the uprising.[72] Though she is famous for both actions the only documented photograph of Zavala pictures her with the plants she

[71] Casasola and Hamill, *Mexico, the revolution and beyond*, 73.
[72] Alex Hughes and Andrea Noble, *Phototextualities: Intersections of Photography and Narrative* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 138.

used to end dying soldiers' lives. It focuses on her compassion, rather than her capacity for violence though both were valuable in the war.

The content of the photographs of women revolutionaries creates a visual narrative of *soldaderas* in the war. The dearth of photographs of women in the archive also effects the reception of the images. The comparatively few photographs function to present the individuals as exceptional rather than common. The conception of the women as extraordinary furthers the construction of myth around the figure of the *soldadera*. The narrative of the photographs and their symbolism are critical ways in which images of revolutionary women were mythologized but it is not the only factor. The material format of the images presents a less obvious manipulation of the reading of the content.

In order to develop iconicity, repetition of the image in a social context is an essential factor.[73] Without multiplicity and wide access the image may not perform in a manner that allows it to become emblematic. How the images of revolutionary women were circulated during the war is critical and photographs of the conflict were published in multiple ways. Photojournalists and photographers sold their images to news outlets where they were printed in newspapers, periodicals, and to local shops, which printed and sold them as individual objects. Additionally many printed them personally and sold them to tourists and members of the military factions. They were printed in more than one format, though one of the most popular and easily accessible was the postcard. Prior to and during the war

[73] Hariman, *No Caption Needed*, 31.

postcards were a "huge business along the border" in both Mexico and the United States, as well as along the border, which was a region that experienced a high volume of violent conflict.[74]

The images discussed in the earlier sections, "Una Zapatista" and Señorita Garcia Gonzales, are both images that were printed as postcards. The medium of a visual object can shape the way the content of an image is interpreted and the photographic medium specifically has its own implications that spill over into objects that make use of photographs.[75] The photographic postcard as an object that is utilitarian and entertaining changes or/and adds to the screens placed over the images. As a tourist object the experience of looking at a picture on a postcard layers another level of context around the image. This added layer of meaning is tied to their wide and casual audience, their collectability, and their history.

The postcard took the place of the wildly popular *tarjetas de visita*, which focused on images of bourgeois life that were collected and traded by the middle and upper classes in Mexico.[76] The first postcard was issued in Mexico in 1882 and prior to the war the images tended towards monuments, nature, and architecture.[77] Another popular theme was the depiction of minorities often represented as

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[74] "Tarjetas postales," *El Mundo: Seminario Ilustado* (5 July 1903): 13.
[75] Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2001), 2.
[76] Magali M Carrera, *Traveling from New Spain to Mexico: Mapping Practices of Nineteenth-Century Mexico* (Duke University Press, 2011), 134.
[77] Isabel Fernández Tejedo, *Recuerdo De México: La Tarjeta Postal Mexicana, 1882-1930* (Banobras, 1994), 39.

"picturesque personages" and in "folkloric scenes" done in the *costumbrismo* style.[78] Specific numbers describing circulation of these objects are unavailable but they were sold in a wide variety of establishments including but not limited to department stores, street vendors, theatres, tourist establishments and hotels.[79] These objects were extremely popular before the war and remained popular until the 1930's in Mexico.[80]

On the face of a postcard there is a shifting of the context of images representing revolutionary women, who were minorities in terms of their available social power. The new framework around the pictured women is a larger group of postcards, rather than the documentation of a war. During the war both Mexican and American photographers were making and selling images in Mexico. It is often unclear who is the author of a particular photograph, but the thematic content is suggestive. The images and descriptions on postcards were often demeaning. They commonly depicted dead Mexican men with the title "bandits," or presented an image of "sexual conquest" featuring Mexican women with American soldiers (Figures 25, 26, and 27).[81] The photographers attached to the Mexican military factions have been established as mostly Mexican men. Not surprisingly these photographs presented a different image of the war.[82] They focus on the troops,

[78] Ibid.
[79] Tejedo, *Recuerdo De México,* 14.
[80] Mraz, *Looking for Mexico,* 32.
[81] Mraz, *Looking for Mexico,* 60.
[82] Ibid, 61.

often effecting a visual discourse of propaganda, and were very popular with the Mexican populace.[83]

In order for images of women revolutionaries to fit within the visual discourse of nationalistic propaganda the types of images called upon to represent them, as evidenced by the *soldadera* on the train (Figure 5), conflated their presence in the war with a foundational inner strength but also with inactivity. The less established portraits of individual women in the war may not illustrate activity but they counter the passiveness projected in other types of images. The portraits of Señorita Garcia and "Una Zapatista" give an opportunity begin a discussion of agency while more clearly showing how difference is constructed and negated through the photographic image.

Conclusion

Photographs of *soldaderas* who participated in the 1910 Mexican Revolution present layered images of women in the war. On the one hand the portraits present individual women who are often not given a voice in the historical narrative of the Revolution. On the other hand the portraits represent multiple symbolic constructions that compete for dominance in the experience of viewing the images. The manipulation of their representation serves as a way to mediate their contested involvement in the war.

[83] Ibid.

The documentary-portraits of *soldaderas* moved both within and beyond the boundaries of the common stereotypes of "Mexican types" and were often much more complex images that related to the propagandistic portraiture of the leaders of the Revolution. The anonymity in accordance with the singling out of the women from their fellow soldiers operated to create an image that might act as a surrogate for all the women involved in the war while also disassociating the bodies of revolutionary women from the actuality of the war. As images of the war replaced the earlier picturesque imagery in tourist postcards, images of women involved in the war were contoured into figures of fantasy, aided by their constructed representation as solitary unnamed figures.

Furthermore the medium of the postcard divorced the content of the image from its context and shaped the images into possessions meant for a fashionable collection or casual looking. There is a similar power in looking and in possessing and the format of the postcard takes the power of looking at a photograph and adds to it not only the power of possession but also the hegemony one has over a commodified and amusing object. This created an alternative framework from which to read the *soldaderas*, the subjects of the photographs. However, as I have argued, the performance of the women within the images often counter-acts this power over the image at the same time it is being executed.

These manipulations move to position women in the war into allegorical figures that may be typecast to fit into the narrative of feminine respectability that would be continued and further constructed following the end of the violent phase

of the Revolution. Artists in the postwar period would appropriate the image of revolutionary women and further the blurring of the line between the individual women in the war and the symbolic figure of the *soldadera*.

Chapter Two

Soldaderas and Postmemory in the *Estampas de la Revolución Méxicana* Portfolio

Soldier, laborer, camp follower, mother, wife, lover, prostitute… These terms all apply to the varied actions women executed during the violent phase of the 1910 Mexican Revolution. Artists in the postwar generation, a second generation that had not experienced the war firsthand, continued the theme of the Revolution in their artworks. They produced images of the conflict that constructed a different narrative than that of the discordant and turbulent factions competing for power or of the complicated lives of individuals fighting in a national conflict. Photographs of the Revolution played an important role in the generation of art images representing the war in 1940's, acting as objects that stood in the place of actual experiences and memories for those artists who were born after the end of the war or were too young to remember it.

In the immediate years following the violent phase of the Revolution prominent artists like José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Alfaro Siqueiros all figured revolutionary women into their murals naming them *soldaderas* and often depicting them in sympathetic portrayals (Figures 28 and 29). These artists were born during the Porfirian dictatorship and lived through the war. Siqueiros even fought as a soldier in the Revolution under Venustiano Carranza's Constitutional Army. The famous murals were in many ways a reflection of not just

their political beliefs but of their experiences in relation to the war. The murals have received a great deal of attention in art historical and other scholarly writing, but they are only a small part of the work of artists active in Mexico who pictured the Revolution.

The violent phase of the Revolution continued to be a theme in Mexican artwork well into the middle of the twentieth century, even among artists who were not yet born at the time of the war. Artists coming out of this second generation identified with the muralists insistence that Mexican art needed to be anchored in social purpose. They maintained that art needed to be "valuable to the people" and their role in society was to "create beauty for all, beauty that enlightens."[1] The notion of public responsibility was a thread that wove itself through artist groups throughout the post-revolutionary period and at least into the 1950's. This ideological sentiment and the social importance of art is expressed explicitly in the 1920's in the manifesto for the Sindicato de los Obreros Técnicos (SOTPE) and is repeated by the print workshop and artists collective El Taller de Gráfica Popular, established in 1937.[2]

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[1] David Alfaro Siqueiros, *Art and revolution* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), 24-25.

[2] For the SOTPE's manifesto see: SOTPE, "Manifesto del Sindicato de Obreros Técnicos, Pintores y Escultores," *El Machete* [The Machete], no. 7 (June 1924): 4. See also Azuela, Alicia. "El Machete and Frente a Frente: Art Committed to Social Justice in Mexico." *Art Journal* 52, no. 1 (April 1, 1993): 82. For the TGP's statements about the purpose of art see the Declaration of Principles in the portfolio *Estampas de la Revolución Méxicana* in Dawn Adès, Guy Brett, Hayward Gallery, Exhibition, *Art in Latin America: the modern era 1820 – 1980* (Yale University Press, 1989), 326.

The subject of the Revolution was popular in artwork of this period in part because the ideology of the Revolution and the ideology of the artists were often parallel. It also remained relevant because the memory of the war and its political goals were kept present by the government administrations in the 1930's and 1940's. They claimed to be continuing the Revolution politically, and began to consolidate official histories to be used to that end. Photographs from the Revolution also remained extremely popular with the public. Yet, the proliferation of images and the political attempts to "continue" the Revolution in the second generation suggest that the memory of the Revolution went beyond mere ideology or political manipulation. It was deeply imbedded in the social and political life of the Mexican people. Scholar Marianne Hirsch describes this connection to a traumatic past by a second generation as "postmemory," which she defines as:

> "(the) relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right."[3]

Postmemory is not a recollection per se but rather a framework for how "received, transferred knowledge of events is being transmuted into history, or into myth."[4] It describes a connection and a sense of ownership to a familial, cultural, and/or political past, felt by individuals who did not live through an event but nevertheless deeply feel the continued consequences of the event in their present.

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[3] Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 103.

[4] Eva Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2004), XV.

The TGP's 1947 portfolio *Estampas de la Revolución Méxicana* reflects the connection of Mexico's second, postwar generation to the Revolution. It visually narrated the history of Mexico and strongly emphasized the violent phase of the Revolution. Through works like this portfolio the violent phase of the Revolution became a substitute for the revolutionary socio-political ideology still strongly present in Mexico's contemporary culture. The portfolio was touted as way to inform an illiterate public about its revolutionary and popular history.

Soldaderas are a small but significant group depicted within the prints. Hirsch describes gender as a trope within the framework of postmemory that acts as an expression of remembrance.[5] Women revolutionaries in the portfolio function beyond representing the women who were involved in the conflict, they are remembered as symbols that related to origination and the home in the newly established Mexican nation.

The portfolio as a whole contains 85 linocut prints that visually chronicle the history of Mexico from the period of Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship through the 1940's. It narrates issues relating to oppression, education, industrialization and modernization, agrarian reform and labor rights, and foreign intervention.[6] The portfolio attempts to create a master narrative through art images presented as historical documents. It does so in part by drawing from content found in the documentary photographic archive of the war creating an underlying claim of

[5] Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 103-108.
[6] Avila, "Chronicles of Revolution and Nation," 37.

historical realism and transparency of message. The representation of women revolutionaries constructs *the soldadera* as an abstract figure rather than as multiple and individual women. The images simultaneously present the women as a locus of alterity, denying them agency in the war, and as figures that ultimately symbolize domesticity and feminine devotion.[7] The image of women involved with the military phase of the Revolution presented in these prints functions to separate them from the reality of the violence of the war and restricts their labor and overall roles, while concurrently creating a deeper layer of allegory over the figures. The characterization of the *soldadera* is broken into two main figures, La Adelita and La Soldadera. La Soldadera is delineated through references to the violence of the war, labor and activity. La Adelita represents an ideal femininity attached romantically to a male soldier and the military troops. Mention of this woman is initially found in a revolutionary *corrido*, and in legend is based on a real woman. The character is shown as traditionally feminine, inactive, and often decoratively dressed in contrast with other *soldaderas,* and is tied directly to notions of romantic love. The two function under the same conceptual apparatus in this portfolio, and more generally they are conflated as one character in their manufactured historical and popular persona.

[7] Andrea Noble, *Photography and Memory in Mexico: Icons of Revolution* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2011), 116. See chapter six, "Seeing Women" for a deeper discussion of the connection between agency and the position of women as a location of alterity.

In the first and second sections of this chapter three prints from the portfolio will demonstrate how the image of the *soldadera* as a figure related to the battlefield was imagined. The first section will establish how the labor and social roles of the women were relegated to notions of caregiving and how the use of anonymity in the portfolio constricts the imagined activity of the *soldadera* to aiding individual men rather than the army on the whole. The second section will illustrate how the role of *soldadera* was conflated with race and class, presenting the women overwhelmingly as indigenous and poor through dress, hair, and location. Additionally it will investigate the political implications of being presented as indigenous and show how these issues function to overwrite the figure of the *soldadera* as a symbolic entity rather than as individual persons. In the third section the character "La Adelita" will be investigated in relation to *soldaderas* as a larger group through the frontispiece of the portfolio. It will explore the sexual connotations relating to her imagined person and will demonstrate how the figure of La Adelita aids in the collapse of the difference between real women and myth in the narrative of the *soldadera*.

Caretakers of the Revolution

The TGP was a collective artistic workshop based in Mexico City that focused on the manufacturing of prints, often from woodblock and linoleum cuts. The founding

figures included Leopoldo Méndez, Pablo O'Higgins, and Luis Arenal.[8] The TGP had roughly twenty-six members with approximately another 25 nonmember artists affiliated with the organization. It functioned as a place for artists to both cultivate their technical skills and to generate works that would be sold or distributed, though artists were not compensated for collectively produced works.[9] Participation was open to anyone, however there was a small monetary contribution required to join. The membership fee was set at fifteen pesos and described by Méndez as going into a "war chest" for the workshop as a whole.[10] It attracted an international group of well-established artists who assisted in producing albums and contributed to projects while never becoming members.[11]

Their mission was clearly asserted in their "Declaration of Principles," established in 1937 upon the inception of the organization.[12] The workshop was

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[8] T.G.P. México: *El Taller De Gráfica Popular : Doce Años De Obra Artística Colectiva/ The Workshop for Popular Graphic: A Record of Twelve Years of Collective Work*, ed. Hannes Meyer (México: La Estampa Mexicana, 1949). This is a self-published volume. As access to this publication was unavailable I relied on the translations done by Theresa Avila.

[9] Avila, "*Chronicles of Revolution and Nation*, 27.

[10] Leopoldo Méndez, et al. *Codex Méndez: prints by Leopoldo Méndez (1902-1969),* (Arizona State University Art Museum, 1999), 31.

[11] James M. Wechsler, "Taller de Gráfica Popular: The Life and Drama of Mexico," in *Mexico and modern printmaking: a revolution in the graphic arts, 1920 to 1950,* ed. John Ittmann (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2006), 208.

[12] Dawn Adès, Guy Brett, Hayward Gallery, Exhibition. *Art in Latin America: the modern era 1820 – 1980,* (Yale University Press, 1989), 326.
Article 1: The People's Graphics Workshop is a collective work center for functional promotion, and for studying different branches of engraving and painting and different methods of reproduction. *Article 2*: The T.G.P. will strive to ensure that its work helps the Mexican people defend and enrich their national culture. This can be achieved only if Mexico is an independent country in a peaceful world. *Article 3*: The T.G.P. believes

largely focused on social and political issues and the artists involved often acted as activists supporting education, labor laws, and a socialist organizing of the economy and natural resources. The artists in the collective identified with the earlier muralists in that their works of art were part of an effort to accomplish an ideological goal in physical form in order to inspire the population to action. The static nature of the mural was considered to be too limiting and the group focused their efforts on the tradition of printmaking brought to popularity in modern Mexico by Jose Guadalupe Posada. They found inspiration in his extensive oeuvre of politically inclined and often satirical works, which regularly commented on Mexico's upper classes and gained popularity as well as notoriety during the reign of Porfirio Díaz.

The workshop was positioned as a collective from the very beginning and the members clearly delineated that the role of art in society was especially important to their mission. In the third article of their Declaration of Principles they assert that art ought to attend to the needs of society while also emulating the reality of a society.[13] The technical format they chose to work with was also important to the larger goals of the artists and the collective as a whole. Printmaking was a medium

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that in order to serve the people, art must reflect social reality of the time and have unity of content and form. By applying this principle, the T.G.P. will strive to raise he artistic standards of its members, in the belief that art can only truly serve the people if it is of the very highest plastic quality. *Article 4*: The T.G.P. will co-operate professionally with other cultural workshops and institutions, workers' organizations, and progressive movements and institutions in general. *Article 5*: The T.G.P. will defend freedom of expression and artists' professional interests.

[13] See above note for full Declaration of Principles.

that allowed for the possibility of greater dissemination due the relative cheapness of materials, the quickness of completion and the respective ease with which they could be made and distributed. The form was considered more democratic and accessible to the public masses in ways that static mural paintings and bourgeois easel painting were not.[14] This ideal related directly to the leftist politics of the artists and thus even the physical form of the artworks fulfilled an ideological function.

The objectives of art serving the people and collaboration meant that ideology played a strong role in the construction of images and though individual style was encouraged to a degree, a standardization of the message and purpose was considered a necessity by the group's leaders. This was accomplished in part through group critiques and meetings with resolutions where projects and their details were decided in a collective fashion. The collective was not entirely focused on ideology. In times of economic stress they did take on commissions that might oppose their ideology in order to continue working.[15] The TGP created multiple medium- to large-scale albums, catalogues, and portfolios between their establishment in 1937 and the late 1950's, after which it began to decline in influence and renown. These projects include the *Taller de Gráfica Popular: Doce*

[14] Alicia Azuela, "El Machete and Frente a Frente: Art Committed to Social Justice in Mexico," *Art Journal* 52, no. 1 (April 1, 1993): 81-83. Issues with "bourgeois" art are also mentioned in the earlier manifesto for the artists' union Sindicato de Obreros Tecnicos, Pintores y Escultores (SOPTE), and its organ El Machete, written by David Alfaro Siqueiros.

[15] Avila, "Chronicles of Revolution and Nation," 29.

Años de Obra Artística Colectiva, *Vida y Drama de Mexico: 20 Años de Vida del Taller de Gráfica Popular* and the 1947 portfolio *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana.*

Soldaderas appear briefly in The *Estampas de la Revolución* portfolio, specifically in relation to the narrative of the 1910 Revolutionary war. The combat chapter of the Revolution takes up thirty-seven prints, of those women figure into twelve. There are four prints out of the twelve including women that feature *soldaderas* specifically: *Las guerrillas contra la dictadura de Victoranio Huerta*, print 43, by Alberto Beltrán (Figure 30); *Vivac de Revolucionarios,* print 49, by Mariana Yampolsky (Figure 31); and *La Soldadera,* print 50, by Alfredo Zalce (Figure 2). Additionally the cover piece, *La Adelita* by Ignacio Aguirre (Figure 32), also presents a *soldadera* of sorts and is a significant characterization in relation to the imagined subjective of the *soldadera*. All of these images feature *soldaderas* in different positions in relation to the war, but as a whole they distance them from the violence of battle. They do so in part through the choices the collective made about how to represent the labor (or a lack there of), and activities performed by the women they construct. Alfredo Zalce's linocut *La Soldadera* features the most active representation of a *soldadera* in the portfolio.

La Soldadera (Figure 2) prominently figures a woman caring for the wounds of an injured man in front of a large train engine.[16] The man lies on the ground propped up by a rolled pack, his eyes closed and his mouth set in a hard line. He wears traditional huaraches, long baggy pants, and a long sleeve shirt covered by a

[16] The linoleum cut is also known by the title *Wounded Guerilla.*

serape. His clothing positions him as rural, and a peasant. The woman stands half bent, half lunging over the man while applying a bandage to his head, her body curving protectively over him. The stance of the woman is awkward and stilted but it succeeds in creating a strong spiraling composition throughout the image, and adds to the sense of movement suggested by the choppy gouging used to construct the natural land around them. The woman's face is in profile and made of strong features that are almost ambiguous in relation to gender. As she completes the task she looks intently at the man. Her hair is covered and she wears a long shapeless dress or skirt. In contrast to the man both her arms and feet are bare. She is also slightly larger than the man, literally taking up more physical space in the print. The woman places her hand on his forehead in order to hold the bandage. It is a tender touch, suggestive of a blessing. To the right of the main figures are the rifles that belong to them. Their weapons have been carefully arranged, balanced against each other and pointing towards the sky creating a triangle, ammunition hanging between them.

In the middle ground a train appears on the left taking up three quarters of the top half of the frame. In the background there are small moving figures, a man with a rifle and three women in long dresses, two of which are apparently pregnant. They have almost nothing with them except for small lumpy packs carried by two of the women over their shoulders. They are bent forward as if they have travelled far with heavy loads, trudging along with a weary sort of determination. The smaller figures roughly reflect the rocky foothills in the background in which they are

almost lost. The sky and the land they are figured against have been carved with short gouging movements. In contrast the figure of the train is decidedly modern. It has smooth, clean lines, and the cylindrical parts contrast sharply with defined, hard angles. The channels alternate from a bright clear white to a strong, intensely inky black. They are the parallel and uninterrupted lines of man-made material. While it may not be explicitly clear that the train is in motion it's placement gives the impression of an inexorable progress that will soon overtake the poor figures, the peasants, which in moments will be removed from sight. The caption to the print reads:

> The glorious "Soldadera" accompanied the troops in the most difficult moments. There was not one "Adelita" –the beautiful Adela Maldonado— there were many. Each battalion included a number. Their virtues provided moral strength to combatants and at the hour of danger they too took up the 30-30 to shoot enemy forces.[17]

The caption credits women with joining in the physical fighting during the war – though only in times of need, being a part of every battalion and "elevates them to the level of hero."[18] At the same time it conversely differentiates the "combatants" from the *soldaderas* and suggests that the *soldadera* and the "Adelita" are the same thing. This is a problematic conflation because it suggests that all women revolutionaries followed the troops out of love and were involved merely to provide virtuous moral support to the combatants who appear to be male by

[17] Avila, "Chronicles of Revolution and Nation," 285.
[18] Ibid.

default. The caption describes *soldaderas* in terms of moral strength and physical attractiveness but does not mention the labor of women in the war. Visually, the rifles and the ammunition place all of the figures in the role of revolutionaries in Mexican post-revolutionary art dealing with the Revolution. The train in the background is also a common symbol of the Revolution. Trains are often seen in photography of the conflict, and in the portfolio revolutionary women are always pictured in conjunction with one. The train gives the work a point of reference that is not depicted elsewhere.

The central woman is shown as doing the job of nurse or medic. Her proximity to a man who has been involved in some sort of altercation as evidenced by his wounds. Her tending to his need for medical assistance is evocative of one of the roles that many real women played during the Revolution, that of giving medical care, but also denotes a notion of woman as caregiver. Though the man is injured and they carry rifles there is no evidence of battle surrounding them. The landscape is empty except for the train, its tracks, and the drudging figures in the background. The Revolution, the actual violence, and the actions of these figures as a part of that war are only insinuated through a series of referents. This displacement of figures from scenes of violence or battle is thematically tied to the presence of women in scenes dealing with the subject of the Revolution in postwar Mexican art.

In the portfolio itself more than 12 prints present either violence or the graphic aftermath of violence. Of these only one, *Las guerrillas contra la dictadura de Victoranio Huerta (*print 43), features women and a battlefield though they do not

appear in the battlefield itself or participate in the violence. Only one other print features a woman actively using violence. Print 22, *Aquiles Serdán y su familia inician en Puebla la Revolución armada, 18 Noviembre 1910*, by Fernando Castro Pacheco (Figure 33) illustrates a well-dressed woman shooting out of a window. Surprisingly this is also the only image that shows an upper class woman in conjunction with violence. It narrates the legendary beginning of the Revolution in which the Serdán family, anarchists who were vocally against the Díaz regime, shoot out of windows in their urban home. In general there is a tendency of artists working with this subject matter to separate women and even *soldaderas* from the depiction of violence relating to the war.

The *soldadera* as the central figure in Zalce's print seems to dictate a different narrative than that of battle for the TGP's artists. Though she is acknowledged as a revolutionary through her rifle, her proximity to the injured man and to the train, she is distanced from the reality of that role through her care of the single injured man and the lack of participation in the implied battle. The image of the woman as a caregiver exemplifies her as an asset to the Revolution through her labor, but chiefly positions this labor as support and care of the men fighting.[19] She is the focal point of the image, given uncommon agency, and is depicted as intimately involved with the work of the Revolution on a personal level. The women in the background underscore the position of women as caregivers in their portrayal of pregnancy. The roles of the active woman in the foreground and the soon to be mothers in the

[19] Macías, *Against all odds,* 39.

background are connected. The background figures do not carry weapons and suggest the role of camp follower more than soldier.

Soldaderas represented as pregnant women, or holding children is a common theme in artworks dealing with the Revolution. The trope is especially apparent in the earlier graphic art and murals of José Clemente Orozco and Leopoldo Méndez. Orozco's work focused on the terrible effects of war and the misery it brought down on the Mexican people. One of his most well known series "*Horrors of the Revolution*" pictures pregnant *soldaderas* repetitively.[20] They are frequently shown in these images as downtrodden mothers and pregnant women following behind equally depressed revolutionary men. His lithographs *Rear Guard* (Figure 34)*, Mujer Grávida,* also known as *Soldadera* and *Soldier's Wife* (Figure 35), *La Bandera* (Figure 14)*,* and the painting *Revolucionarios*, also known as *Soldaderas* (Figure 1), all depict *soldaderas* in this manner.[21]

The lithograph *La Bandera* (The Flag) 1928, (Figure 14) from the series is representative.[22] The image presents a group of men staggered and overlapping, wearing similar clothing and hats, carrying rifles and partially covered by a large Mexican flag. The flag weighs down the men, suggesting the goals and reality of the Revolution are a heavy burden to bear. In the background a train sits while they

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[20] John Ittmann, *Mexico and modern printmaking: a revolution in the graphic arts, 1920 to 1950,* (New Haven u.a.: Yale Univ. Press, 2006), 127.

[21] Orozco's painting Revolutionarios, or Soldaderas (Figure 1), is closely related, if not identical to a fresco by the same name located in the Colegio de San Ildefonso, Mexico City, Mexico.

[22] The lithograph *La Bandera* was originally drawn in pen and India ink between 1926 and 1927.

cross the tracks. There is one woman in the rear, who is heavily pregnant and appears barefoot. She is overburdened by her pregnancy much in the way the men are burdened by the flag. She is separated from the main group, her slightly parted mouth and slack jaw shows her to be out of breath and tired while she rests her left hand on her swollen belly and clutches her chest with her right. In the pregnant woman, Orozco creates a figure that can be identified with in an extremely emotional and even sentimental sense, through her weariness, desolation and the condition of her pregnancy. She is not fit for the road nor for battle yet she presumably follows her husband or lover even in the face of her own suffering.

This image of pregnancy and childcare is both pragmatic and a way to circumscribe the role of women in the war. Out of necessity women brought their children and gave birth on the road. A lieutenant in the Villista forces, Nicolás Durán noted that the *soldadera*,

> "received her newborn child in the most primitive surroundings. She would wrap him, protecting his small body with her own from the cold and the dust of the roads, and then she would continue to follow the men."[23]

The image of women carrying babies is a reflection of the reality of life on the road.[24] Without other viable options women who had children were forced to bring them if they participated in the Revolution, and pregnancy while on the road was always a possibility. However the repeated use of pregnancy as a trope in images that represent the Revolution within a limited number of images of women

[23] Ittmann, *Mexico and modern printmaking*, 157.
[24] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military*.

revolutionaries simultaneously portrays pregnancy as the natural state of womanhood while painting the women as exceptional. The overabundance of these images and the lack of corresponding depictions of women as soldiers or paid workers restrict the complexity of their labors in the popular imagination. The picturing of the reality of life in the Revolution in the TGP portfolio is layered, on the one hand the content chosen does reflect in some ways real events and moments, but it also represents an ideological vision of the reality of the Revolution, and more to the point of the role of women in the war and in society.

This is further complicated by the collective's repetition of the content of well-known photographs. The use of photographs from the Revolution suggests the portfolio is more than a work of art, it asserts that it is a historical document. The composition of the rifles in the foreground of the image and the inclusion of the train reference photographs from the revolution, specifically those from the Casasola Archive (Figure 36). The portfolio often uses these photographs as a basis for the content of the prints. This use of documentary images as a foundation for the prints is something that I argue as purposeful and used as a device to suggest validity of the historical narrative presented in the portfolio as a whole.

Around 1940 publication of Gustavo Casasola's *Historia gráfica de la revolución* allowed the population to have ready access to photographs from the Revolution. Carlos Monsiváis has observed in his work that the photographs from the war had become popular previous to the 1940's in part because a large portion of the population had not experienced the violent phase of the Revolution

themselves.[25] In theories of postmemory, trauma like the destruction caused by war, can sever the generational link to the past by destroying normal modes of historical records. For the postgeneration photographs can represent an "embodied experience… through the indexical link that joins the photograph to its subject."[26] The photographic image affords the connection through symbolic structures.

The TGP's use of photographs for the basis of their prints represents both a claim of historical accuracy and a way for Mexican viewers to connect to the symbolic and ideological goals of the Revolution. On the subject of the visual nature of their work the TGP artists assert in the prologue to the portfolio that there is,

> "No need to explain the essentially simple presentation of this work, because in a country like ours, with an illiteracy rate so high, the printed image is one of the most direct ways of disseminating social and historical events."

This statement undergirds the collective's goal of creating social art. They assert that they can educate the uneducated masses through viewing their images. More than that they suggest that their presentation of social and historical events is simple and self-evident. Much in the same way that the photographic image would seem to suggest a transparent record of reality, the artists claim to offer a record of a past they did not experience in their work.

The fiction of transparency in photography, discussed in the first chapter, is doubled here. The prints offer a vision of history that is mediated first through a screen of the photographic image and then through needs and choices of the second-

[25] Monsiváis, "Notas sobre la historia de la fotografía en México," 35.
[26] Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 110.

generation artists. More than that, they note that the purpose of the project was "reviving in an 'illustrative form' the heroic struggle of our country for 'Land and Liberty.'" The use of a term such as 'reviving' rather than recalling, suggests that there was a desire to not just remember but to recreate something. Hirsch argues that photographs allow later generations to not just connect but reanimate the past more than written or oral histories.[27] They may act as a site to project the needs of the viewer in the present, collapsing some of the space between the pictured past and the present viewer. The desire to reanimate the Revolution is evident in contemporaneous politics as well.

The Cárdenas administration is noted for its attempts to further the goals of the revolution during its presidency from 1934-40, as well as asserting the present was a *continuation* of the revolutionary tradition.[28] Historians Lorenzo Meyer and Hector Camn have argued that this sense of revolutionary continuity continued into the Presidency of Avila Camacho in the 40's.[29] During his presidency Cárdenas promoted the figures of men like Emiliano Zapata, who were already heroes in the popular imagination as a way to nurture national cohesion. Additionally he desired the leaders of the Revolution to be seen as figures that fought out of noble intentions for a "just cause," who could inspire national pride.[30] This is mirrored in many of

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[27] Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 115.
[28] Aguilar and Lorenzo Meyer, *In the shadow of the Mexican revolution,* 160-161.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Hart, "Review Essay of Thomas Benjamin, La Revolución: Mexico's Great Revolution as Memory, Myth, and History." The previous sentence is also a summary of information from the same source.

the prints in the portfolio, which feature Madero (prints 28, 30), Zapata (prints 24, 25), and Villa (print 37), in portraits or heroic poses. The TGP's use of images that were already well known may also be viewed as a financially prudent move in that the popularity of the photographs may have encouraged sales of the prints. It also works to subvert certain histories, such as that of women in the war, and reinforce others constructed by the small number of images that had become iconic. This is particularly relevant because it was a period in which an institutionally recognized historical narrative was being constructed and promoted.

The master narrative of Mexico's history was being created partially through government programs and competitions focused on the writing of comprehensive histories that continued through the 1950's. The portfolio, intended as a visual narrative of Mexico's history, is strongly tied to this trend. The prologue to the portfolio states that it was created "As a patriotic response to this desire of the President of our country [Miguel Aléman] …" to "…honor and aggrandize Mexico."[31] In fact the creation of the portfolio was spurred on by a competition started by the Section of the Social Action Department of the Federal District.[32] Even though the images were described by the TGP as being so simple as to not need explanation captions were nonetheless included. Notably, the captions were written by Alberto Morales Jimenez, a historian and the only scholar given specific credit in the portfolio. Despite Jimenez being the only scholar mentioned the TGP worked with

[31] See Declaration of Principles.

[32] Helga Prignitz-Poda, *El Taller de Gráfica Popular en México, 1937-1977* (México: Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1992), 90,91.

many individuals, including historians, outside of the collective on the project.[33] Though it is important to note that there is no indication of whether the captions were written before the images were made or vice versa.

After his work with the portfolio Jimenez was awarded first prize for a government sponsored national history book competition by the administration of Miguel Aléman. Art historian Mary Theresa Avila has suggested that this points to a connection between the TGP, the Mexican government, and a national narrative. Furthermore, it suggests that the narrative constructed by the TGP was in line with an institutional and national history being promoted by the government.[34] With one exception, Ignacio Aguirre, none of the artists working on the portfolio were involved with the military factions of the Revolution, primarily because of young age.[35] The collective instead relied on multiple sources including, as Méndez described, informal conversations with historians and poets to create the narrative presented in the portfolio, which would be tweaked and finally decided upon by the TGP members as a whole during collective critiques.[36]

The assertion that this portfolio could be viewed as a source of transparent and historical truth and as a reflection of the reality of the war is unrealistic, but significant in that it attempts to manipulate the way that the images are received. In relation to the figures of the *soldaderas* it presents, the assertion of truthfulness

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[33] Avila, "Chronicles of Revolution and Nation," 30-40.
[34] Ibid, 38-40. The previous sentence is a summary as well.
[35] Prignitz-Poda, *El Taller de Gráfica Popular en México*, 279.
[36] Jules Heller and Jean Makin, *Codex Méndez: Prints by Leopoldo Méndez 1902-1969* (Arizona State University Art Museum, 1999), 38.

positions the images as captured moments in time, similar to photography. Conversely, in being presented as a historical document it validates the photographs it draws content from as reliable, transparent historical evidence. The fallacy of transparency hides the complexity of representation, dominant historical constructions, and issues of gender and race.

In print 50 the moment presented is one of labor, and an important labor at that. Without medical care the revolutionaries would have had little hope of success. While the image of a woman completing a task that was pivotal to the revolutionaries gives status to women in the war, the details in the print suggest assumptions about gender and race that stereotype *soldaderas,* especially if taken for granted. The image is exceptional in that it presents the *soldadera* as a figure with agency, in a moment of action, but it also marks her as poor, indigenous, domestic, and attached to a single man. *Soldaderas* are not often pictured as agents, but they are repeatedly envisioned as tied to particular men as is seen in Mariana Yampolsky's *Vivac de Revolucionarios,* print 49 (Figure 31).

Print 49 features a group of men and women in what appears to be an army camp. *Vivac* translates to bivouac, referring to a night guard suggesting that the individuals have been tasked with guarding the camp. The location is suggested through the presence of a train, rifles, ammunition on the bodies of the individuals, and what appear to be supplies in the background. The use of the location of the camp pushes the *soldaderas* even farther from the battlefield than print 50 does. Despite the title suggesting that these figures are doing a job, this image is not one of

labor or war, but of a moment of rest between battles where the men and women are singing, eating, and relaxing.

In the foreground a group of two women and three men in sombreros sing. One woman stands facing the viewer singing between two men, while one rests his hand on her shoulder and the other plays the guitar. Another man and woman crouch below the trio. The woman faces away from the viewer but gives the appearance of youthfulness. The emotional attitude of all five is surprisingly upbeat for a group in the middle of a war, or for a group supposed to be on guard. As such it is somewhat unbelievable, contrasting with the asserted truthfulness of the portfolio's images. It would be too simplistic to claim that the individuals who participated in the war never found a few moments to relax and enjoy an activity that was more lighthearted than battle. Though it is most certainly the case that a scene such as this was possible it is not an image that was part of the popular photography documenting the war. This may be a result of the political agendas of the persons who had the power to manipulate the use of photographs from the war but it also departs from the TGP's use of common imagery. Details in the print also suggest an alternate message in the content than the visualization of a historical narrative.

The image of a man singing and playing a guitar has connotations that go beyond entertainment in Mexican culture, especially in relation to the Revolution. A popular form of musical entertainment and storytelling was, and still is, known as a *corrido*. In a basic sense the Mexican *corrido* is a narrative folk song performed by a

man, with a basis in poetry. In relation to the Revolution it became an important format to create and disseminate accounts of battles and heroics.[37] Accounts of rebel forces often tell of soldiers singing *corridos* relating the events of recent battles to an accompanying guitar.[38] After the war the musical form was popularly portrayed as a subversive cultural tool, which narrated events in a manner that contested the rendering of such events by those in power.[39]

The portrayal of a man singing in the context of this print underlines the ideological notion that the Revolution was an act subverting the hegemonic control of the Díaz regime. As a side note I would also suggest that this could be a way of presenting the portfolio itself as a subversion of the historical narrative.[40] The print also visually features an aggregate of military factions portraying a consolidated effort rather than the more realistic competing factions.[41] In order for the Revolution to remain a useful political tool in the creation of national cohesiveness the image of the Revolution needed to appear and be remembered by the public as undivided.[42] These details underscore the symbolic nature of the imagery and

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[37] José E. Limón, *Mexican Ballads, Chicano Poems: History and Influence in Mexican-American Social Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 10.

[38] Américo Paredes, *"With His Pistol in His Hand": A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, n.d.), 25-27.

[39] José Pablo Villalobos and Juan Carlos Ramírez-Pimienta, "'Corridos' and 'La Pura Verdad': Myths and Realities of the Mexican Ballad," *South Central Review* 21, no. 3 (October 1, 2004), 129.

[40] This is not the place to examine such a possibility as it is not a part of the larger goal of this chapter, but it is a claim that requires further inquiry.

[41] Avila, "Chronicles of Revolution and Nation," 270.

[42] Noble, "Photography, Memory, Disavowal," 204.

characterize the image as an attempt to visualize the hopeful and idealized nature of the goals of the Revolution.

The women are dressed in long skirts, the one singing wears her hair decoratively tied with ribbons and the other squatting woman wears two long plaits down her back. There is a third woman in the background who could perhaps be selling food to two men sitting or squatting as she appears to be approaching them with something held up in her hands. She also wears a long skirt but her hair is unbound and appears disheveled in comparison. The figures of this group appear more downtrodden and disheveled, suggesting the weariness that might accompany living in a military camp. Though only one woman, the singer in the foreground, has ammunition across her chest to mark her as a revolutionary all three appear to be camp followers rather than soldiers themselves due to their clothing, hairstyles, and activities. The squatting woman and the woman in the background are marked as poor and indigenous through their clothing and hair, while the dress and hair of the woman standing in the foreground reads as wealthier than that of the others.

Her appearance suggests a specific characterization of the *soldadera* as the typified 'Adelita.' The women in Yampolsky's image figure prominently in the scene, which appears to purposefully declare how ingrained women were in the army factions. Yet it is done so in a somewhat stereotypical and partially unrealistic manner. Both women in the foreground wear dresses, and one has taken the time to tie ribbons into her hair. They do not carry weapons and present an image of happy and carefree young women perhaps in love with the men they physically are close

to. They are associated with the men next to them in a possibly intimate manner through touch or position, evoking the role of lover or wife. The roles presented here are constricted to a more socially acceptable position in which they act as consolation and distraction for the weary soldiers. The figures are fairly typical, meaning they do not suggest real or individual women. The faces of both the women and the men may be somewhat individual but the bodies and the dress are simplified and repeated throughout the portfolio.

Both *Vivac de Revolucionarios* and *La Soldadera,* make use of anonymous individuals in the foreground to represent revolutionaries. The figuring of the men and women as individual – singular, but also anonymous, functions in multiple ways. The figures are meant to represent the masses, with the individual standing in for the many, and are thus typified and nonspecific in order for that function to be met. Avila argues this works to sustain attention in the portfolio on the centralized issues of nation and society.[43] However it also reinforces the notion that *soldadera*s were "attached" to a single man whom they followed and cared for. In print 50 the *soldadera* cares for a single man, and in print 49 two of the women are connected through physical touch and position to particular men. In order to decipher how the images functioned in the 1940's it is important to understand how *soldaderas* were viewed in society during the earlier phase of the Revolution as well as contemporaneously.

[43] Avila, "Chronicles of Revolution and Nation."

Mexican literature provides some insight into the popular construction of the *soldadera* as well as the ways in which femininity intersected with the character of the *soldadera*. Mariano Azuela's 1915 novel, *Los de Abajos* (The Underdogs), portrays a *soldadera* named La Pintada as sadistic, brutal and jealous. Pintada translates to "painted" or "piece of graffiti." Relating the *soldadera* to graffiti presents her as a figure that does not belong where she is, she is metaphorically unnatural and societally undesirable. In the book the woman kills the young, submissive, and desirable camp follower who is the love interest of main character. In 1944 the author Francisco Rojas Gonzáles, took on the theme of the Revolution and wrote a semi-biographical novel titled *La Negra Angustias*. This was the first Mexican literary work that depicted a *soldadera* as a leader and a protagonist.[44] The female coronel is portrayed as masculine, assertive, and independent. Her demeanor is not celebrated in the book but treated as transgressing gender norms in a negative way. As her role changes from coronel to wife she ultimately becomes "submissive and self-sacrificing."[45] Marriage and domesticity cure her abnormal attitude and grant her the opportunity to find her "true identity" in the position of mother and wife.[46] Her changing roles reflect a more traditional and apparently desirable femininity, one that allows her to find happiness. What these representations have in common is that the moral and desirable woman, and

[44] Laura Kanost, "Viewing the Afro-Mexican Female Revolutionary: Francisco Rojas González's 'La Negra Angustias,'" *Hispania* 93, no. 4 (December 1, 2010): 555.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military*, 87.

soldadera, is the one who fulfills the role of domesticity in one way or another. The undesirable woman fulfills a different role, that of violence and independence, and was commonly depicted as masculine and unstable.

The image of the *soldadera* playing the role of caregiver then represents a layered purpose in the construction of their identity. It argues that the artists of the TGP wanted to represent s*oldaderas* as integral, useful, and morally righteous figures in the Revolution contrasting with earlier and contemporaneous stereotypes, but it also removes them from the violence and simplifies their role. Giving care was sanctified as women's work through associations with motherhood and through the acceptable notion of a woman following a *single* man in order to care for him in a manner that is evocative of the patriarchal nuclear family and the home. If the man cannot be in the home, due to social conditions such as war, ideally the woman would remain there. Yet when women did not remain in the home and joined men in the battlefield in whichever role they chose there was an attempt to mediate their choices and actions through depicting them as idealized and self-sacrificing caregivers. Avila describes the camp followers as "recreating a domestic structure" in the battlefield.[47] While they may have brought kitchen tools, children and other domestically related items I would suggest that this is too simplistic of a description of their actions and labors. They were not necessarily relatives or spouses of soldiers charged with creating domestic space. In reality,

[47] Avila, "Chronicles of Revolution and Nation," 287.

many camp followers were laborers, paid by the soldiers they worked for, and free to choose their employer.[48]

Furthermore it is misleading to draw any stringent distinctions between the different types of labor women, or men for that matter, occupied within the military factions. Men, especially from the lower classes, were forced into labor as cooks, among other things.[49] Women who were considered camp followers are noted in first hand accounts as fighting often enough that the term loses its more specific meaning. Anita Brenner's description of camp followers is considered representative,

> "The women, though their job was foraging, cooking and looking after the wounded, pitched in and fought if they felt like it. If a woman's husband was killed, she could either attach herself to some other man or take over his uniform and gun herself..." [50]

Refocusing the visualization of *soldaderas* in postwar art images that assert historical authority as caregivers mediates the often non-normative role they played in the war into a more socially acceptable position. They are not in the home because there is no home, but if women could be viewed as continuing to be domestic, recreating the home despite being in a battlefield (one that is tied to the creation of a new nation), then the nation itself could become a symbol for the family home. Thus representations of *soldaderas* as caregivers place women as the caretakers of the new nation. Interestingly, women gained the right to vote the year

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[48] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military*.
[49] Edith O'Shaughnessy, *A Diplomat's Wife In Mexico*. (Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1916). http://archive.org/details/diplomatswifeinm008716mbp, 58.
[50] Ibid, 36. Anita Brenner was a prominent Mexican author.

prior to the publication of this portfolio after a long and drawn out fight with multiple government administrations.[51] However harsh reactions to women joining the workforce in large numbers beginning at least in the early 1930's continued through the 1940's begging the question of whether these images suggested a victory in equality for women or were meant to promote a return to domesticity.

The prints depict an idealization of women contrasting much of the negative stereotypes of *soldaderas* while simultaneously distancing them from the actuality of the war. The prints that do include *soldaderas* position them compositionally and narratively as focal points, presenting them as useful and engaged. It paints them as figures whose socially transgressive acts of soldiering or leaving the home are transformed into an idealized domesticity. The presentation of feminine labor in the prints is strongly tied to caregiving, motherhood, and domestic work. This results in a narrative that portrays women as symbolically recreating the home in the battlefield for individual soldiers who are sacrificing themselves for the creation of a new nation. For the figure of the *soldadera* this recuperates the traditional moral standing of femininity but it also simultaneously reinforces negative stereotypes and continues to present a limited concept of acceptable societal roles for women. The extremely small number of images with *soldaderas* additionally complicates the vision of women as integral, instead making them out of the ordinary. Furthermore the TGP's assertion of transparency and historical accuracy tied to the false notion of the essential truthfulness of the photographic image constricts the imagined roles

[51] Macías, *Against all odds.*

of women within the context of a culture where the number of people who had experienced the war firsthand was diminishing.

Bare Feet, Braids, and Dresses: Picturing Class and Indigenousness

Associations with caregiving and motherhood also have implications regarding race and class, both for Mexico as a whole and the artists in the TGP. Hannes Meyer noted that the artists who were members of the TGP resolutely associated themselves with the poor, lower classes, because of their families' economic and social status. He declared that the members were "rooted in Indian peasant stock on their mother's side," suggesting they felt a familial and personal connection to the indigenous population and its economic and political plight.[52] The statement also implies that the members saw a symbolic or conceptual connection between women and indigenousness. This is interesting in that almost all of the *soldaderas* are obviously pictured as poor and indigenous. Indigeneity and economic status in the prints are often connected. They are expressed through physical referents such as dress, traditional hairstyles, and other symbolic elements like the sombrero.

Print number 43, *Las guerrillas contra la dictadura de Victoriano Huerta* by Alberto Beltrán (Figure 30) features two scenes. The narrative is that of a portion of the Zapatista army mobilizing and subsequently fighting the forces of Victoriano

[52] Meyer, "El Taller De Gráfica Popular: Doce Años De Obra Artística Colectiva, XX."

Huerta, the general who overthrew and executed Madero before taking over the government himself in 1913. The print consists of two registers set vertically, one on top of the other, and separated by a thin line of blank space. The scene in the top register takes up most of the pictorial space, a full two-thirds of the printed page, and shows two groupings of revolutionaries. The largest group stands atop a hill in the foreground waiting for weapons while one individual moves forward to take a gun from a man handing them out. The group is almost entirely made up of men wearing sombreros. The background is full of rolling hills and sparse vegetation. There is a single woman in the front and to the group's right, she stands with them but is on the edge of the crowd. The woman grips a rifle horizontally, her arms slack. She wears a long skirt, her hair is braided, and she has a single strap of ammunition across her chest. Again she is barefoot while the men whose feet are visible are wearing shoes. Another woman is with a group at the bottom of the hill. The figure is very small and her gender is indicated solely through her donning of a long skirt. The reading of gender is complicated by the figure wearing a sombrero, which is usually reserved for men. While women are occasionally shown wearing sombreros, to my knowledge men are very rarely if ever shown wearing feminine clothing in Mexican art of this period. This is not the case in photography which does picture transgender men in feminine clothing, albeit rarely.

The issue of cross-dressing is intimately tied to *soldaderas* in a historical sense because women often took on the guise of men during the Revolution in order to fight and rise in the military ranks without harassment. However, in relation to

the TGP portfolio there is no evidence that women are depicted as actively cross-dressing. Femininity is always pictorially equated with skirts or dresses. Due to this portrayal, or lack there of, the issue of women dressing as men in the actual war is not an integral issue here, except to give a counter balance between the images and reality. As the focus here is on the portrayal of *soldaderas,* the connection between men and cross-dressing during the Revolution is a subject that won't be addressed here but warrants further investigation.

The figures in the top register do little more than wait restlessly. They stand appearing agitated against the empty terrain. In contrast to the generally inactive scene above it, the bottom register depicts a battle raging between revolutionary forces and federal forces on a train. The bottom register is half the size of the scene above it and shows multiple groups of men actively shooting at each other while a train begins to crash off the tracks in the background.

This print is an example of the effort taken to separate women from the images depicting active violence. The subject matter of the images seems initially to suggest that *soldaderas* might be placed within a battle scene, however the artist carefully avoids doing so. The women appear only in the upper register where the apparently imminent battle below is only suggested. The woman in the foreground stands motionless against a sea of jumbled men who give the appearance of a milling crowd. The woman holds the rifle loosely, in such a way as to distance her from its use. In the bottom register where the battle rages, there are no women included. These elements in and of themselves may not seem particularly important

but in the larger context they represent a pattern of active disengagement of *soldaderas* from acts of violence.

In the top register, only three figures hold guns: the man handing out rifles, the woman, and a man directly behind her. The man behind the *soldadera* is mostly blocked from view but they appear to be both holding their rifles in a slack position, in a manner not quickly utilized. That contrasts sharply with the lower register, which depicts only men. Almost all of these figures are actively shooting their rifles at the opposing faction. The *soldaderas* are only ever shown adjacent to battle, only in images that reference a previous or upcoming battle, they never actually appear in battle. One possible explanation for the inclusion of women in the upper register at all, is that the artist may have been trying to make clear that the forces pictured were the Zapatistas. The scene of the Zapatistas additionally seems to hold more importance than the scene of battle being that the top register is double the size of the bottom. It calls more attention to the large group of people getting ready for battle implying that the picturing of rural people gathering to fight was more critical to their goals in the portfolio than picturing battle. The Zapatistas were largely poor, rural farmers who were known for donning sombreros and for having women fighting in their troops. Including women in the upper register allowed the viewer to recognize the Zapatistas more readily but it also aids in the visual connection of *soldaderas* with poor and indigenous peoples.

Being associated with the Zapatistas is not the only way that *soldaderas* were positioned as poor, rural, or indigenous in this portfolio. Social class is strongly

implicated through clothing, and what is worn and not worn by the women in the portfolio's prints is telling. All the women in prints 43 and 50, and two of them in print 49, wear shabby and very sack-like articles of clothing. None of the women whose feet are visible are shown wearing shoes with the exception of the singing woman, which will become relevant in the later discussion of the frontispiece, *La Adelita*. Bare feet reflect another trend in the representation of *soldaderas* in this portfolio and the larger visual culture, which visually suggests a level of poverty as well as indigenous roots. Indigenous persons were commonly depicted as barefoot and abjectly poor in earlier photography. In the beginning of the twentieth century well-known photographer Charles B. Waite, who worked with both documentary and commercial images, was known for his "*tipos*" which often featured poor and indigenous individuals, such as this young girl (Figure 37), barefoot and in tattered clothing in picturesque vignettes. In the years after the Revolution bare feet continued to be a trope in images picturing indigenous persons. Orozco's *Touristas y Aztecas* (Figure 38), and Jean Charlot's *Leopard Hunter* (Figure 39), both show native persons outdoors and barefoot. Clara Mairs' etching *Mexico City* (Figure 40), contrasts the modern city with indigenousness. It shows a stocky indigenous woman, as evidenced by her facial features, hairstyle, clothing and bare feet, looking at lingerie through a window in a shop named *La Sorpresa* (The Surprise) in Mexico City.[53]

[53] Ittmann, *Mexico and modern printmaking*, 125.

Being barefoot connotes a connection to the earth both physically and allegorically. The indigenous body and the land were often associated with an idyllic past and folk traditions in contrast with the industrialization of the nation, creating a sense of anachronism that is passed along to the *soldadera* as an indigenous body.[54] Symbolism relating women to the earth is well documented in art, and works like Diego Rivera's *The Liberated Earth with Natural Forces Controlled by Man*, 1927, (Figure 41) represent one of the many precedents for this in twentieth-century Mexican art. The connection to the land is played out in two ways in print 50. First the woman is conspicuously without shoes of any kind, even while the man, who is also depicted as rural and indigenous, wears them. Secondly the technique they are carved with mirrors that of the land in the background. The line work reflects the flowing and unexpected directions of the natural world around them. Simultaneously the figures starkly contrast with the more modern figure of the train, which is carved to reflect the clean, parallel lines of manmade material. Figures are additionally connected to the land and marked as indigenous through physical location.

In print 43 the location of the Zapatistas is figured as the countryside. In fact, all of the images in the portfolio including *soldaderas* are pictured as far outside of cities, which further works to suggest a link between these women, the land, and indigenous groups. This is a common characterization of the placement of battles in

[54] Hedrick, *Mestizo modernism*, 32-33.

the portfolio as well, possibly as a way to further psychologically connect the Revolution to the lower classes and the desire for agrarian reform. However that too is misleading as battles were fought in urban areas as well as in rural areas, as evidenced by documents relating to specific battles and the war, personal stories and the pictured aftermath in war photography (Figure 42).

Hairstyle is also significant in marking the women as belonging to a generalized racial group. In Beltrán's print the braids worn by the woman in the foreground are evocative, as braids are often a symbol of traditionalism in Mexico. The conventional hairstyle is commonly used to delineate what might be called "Indian-ness" in women in the region. The previously mentioned *Mexico City* (Figure 40) uses this device but other images like Francisco Díaz León's T*he Pilgrims* (Figure 43), Francisco Dosamantes' *Three Yalaltecan Women* (Figure 44), and Diego Rivera's *Sugar Cane* (Figure 45) present women in braids in exotic locales. The physical connection to indigeneity, asserted through the representation of the women's bodies, and the allegorical connection to the land asserted through the bare feet and location, functions to reposition *soldaderas* as symbolic of the cultural past.

Being pictured as indigenous had political implications as well. In late 1920's Mexico there was a push to homogenize the population and incorporate all of the indigenous groups through a mixing of the races to create what José Vasconcelos, the then Minister of Education, called the fifth or cosmic race. Modernity in Mexico would be closely intertwined with the goal of race mixing, creating a national

identity that was hybridized, or mestizo.[55] The displacement of the indigenous body from modernity was largely connected to the belief that the indigenous groups that remained unincorporated with society put the welfare of the future nation at risk.[56]

In print 50 the background figures are almost lost in the hills behind them. They are carved in such a way as to be almost camouflaged. The train looms behind them appearing as if it will over take the figures in mere moments, when they will disappear. I argue that this is not incidental. Between 1944 and 1947 the Minister of Education launched a campaign for literacy in which all of the TGP artists contributing to the portfolio participated. The campaign paralleled that of earlier educational missions like those instituted by José Vasconcelos where artists, among others, were charged with the education and promotion of literacy in Indian villages and remote rural areas. Many of the artists who would later be members of the TGP took part in these "cultural missions."[57] Those missions related to the afore mentioned desire in the late 20's to homogenize the population and integrate the indigenous peoples with the nation as a whole, meaning they would essentially disappear as a discrete cultural body. Returning to 1920's social policies in the reading of this image may initially seem to stretch the limits of temporal connection,

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[55] Ibid, 3-4.

[56] Mary K. Vaughan and Lewis, *The eagle and the virgin: national identity, memory and utopia in Mexico, 1920-1940* (Durham, N.C.; Chesham: Duke University Press; Combined Academic [distributor], 2006), 176.

[57] Avila, "Chronicles of Revolution and Nation," 30-35. The information in the sentence prior is also from this source.

however as previously asserted the ideals and goals of the Revolution continued to be strongly entrenched in the politics and the social imagination through the 1940's. The TGP on the whole even considered itself to be part of that continuation. Hannes Meyer, who was the technical director for the *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana* portfolio wrote in the earlier album-catalogue *El Taller De Gráfica Popular: Doce Años De Obra Artística Colectiva:*

> "The question of the TGP's future is in practice identical with that of the Mexican nation and of the revolutionary forces within. An art that is true to the life of the people is inseparably bound to their destiny…"[58]

The image of the peasants about to disappear in the background of print 50, acts as a way of illustrating the continuing efforts to bring the nation together as a whole and incorporate the indigenous groups, who were seen as an origin source for creativity, tradition, and culture, through education and intermarriage.

Indigeneity was positioned as being vital to the foundation of the nation, but as part of a past that could be utilized for the good of the nation. However the progressive blotting out of the peasant figures may also be read in a less race centered way, perhaps as a proposition of class and labor equality. In other words, the poor will disappear through the creation of a nation that uplifts its inhabitants through education and labor equality. However the heavy linkage between race and class in this portfolio suggests that the two issues need to be dealt with in tandem.

This is relevant to the image of *soldaderas* for multiple reasons. Positioning

[58] Hannes Meyer, "*El Taller De Gráfica Popular : Doce Años De Obra Artística Colectiva,*" xxii.

them as indigenous affiliates them with the notion that they are part of a foundational past but not necessarily part of the future in a physical way. This sense of anachronism in conjunction with the carefully constructed roles, and the anonymity used in the images, positions them as symbolic to the nation, figures that represent an idealized womanhood even in the face of social, cultural and political upheaval.

La Adelita: The Revolutionary Lover

The frontispiece of this portfolio is titled *La Adelita* (Figure 32) and focuses on a young woman in the foreground. La Adelita is a character that responds to the Mexican characterization of the word '*soldadera,'* which locates women involved with the military as primarily unpaid relatives or more to the point, romantic companions. The positioning of soldaderas as Adelitas in the 1940's also reflects the continuation of attempts following the war by the Mexican military to resituate historical perceptions about the role of *soldaderas* in the history of warfare in Mexico. The military banned women from their ranks in 1925 and encouraged the conception of women previously involved in the military as wives or relatives.[59] Though women like Petra Herrera in Carranza's in troops were acknowledged as holding high-level ranks the military command described women as camp followers and primarily as an embarrassment.[60] General Miguel Ruelas stated,

[59] Salas, *Soldaderas in the Mexican military,* 49-50.
[60] Ibid, 48.

"There should be organized a corps of military administration which shall eliminate from our armies the women camp followers who, in addition to their disadvantages and lamentable backwardness they reveal, make us the butt of all writers on this subject."[61]

The writer, activist, and cultural critic Carlos Monsiváis described the constructed historical memory of revolutionary women primarily as "witnesses of male valor, objects of their affections, and nuisances in the march toward modernity."[62] The visual manifestation of soldaderas as romantic partners reflects these feelings about the women in the military.

Ignacio Aguirre crafted the print *La Adelita* that in addition to its imagery includes the title and a note about the portfolio. The featured woman in the foreground is alone and waving goodbye to a train full of revolutionary men carrying flags and rifles. The train and its track cut a strongly curved diagonal across the image. The woman, Adelita, stands with her back to the viewer, her left arm outstretched waving at the departing men. The tilt of her head and extended body suggest longing as she watches the men depart. They are stacked on top of each other on the roof of the train and a multitude lean out or sit in the opened door waving their hands and sombreros in response to the woman. She wears a long dress or skirt while her upper body and head are wrapped in a large shawl, only her hand and a small portion of her face are visible. Her dress diverges from the norm

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[61] Manuel Calero, *Essay on the reconstruction of Mexico* (De Laisne & Carranza, Inc, n.d.), 53.

[62] Jean Franco, *Plotting Women: Gender and Representation in Mexico* (Columbia University Press, 1989), 22.

previously seen for picturing *soldaderas*. It has an apparent overlay, moves in a lighter fashion, and is seemingly richer and more fashionable than the drab and dirty looking peasant dresses that are normally pictured, implying something other than rural or indigenous roots. However neither does it imply an upper class woman or a great deal of wealth. In this respect it appears more like the central woman in Yampolsky's *Vivac de Revolucionarios,* and the collective nature of decision making for the TGP's projects, as well as the featured act of singing, implies that there is a connection in the role that the women were meant to invoke. While the subject matter of this print is seemingly innocuous – an animated, somewhat wistful and hopeful image of a woman waving goodbye to men off to war, the woman and the title of the print have complex implications and need to be further examined.

The title *La Adelita* is a name that implicates a revolutionary tale of sorts that was the subject of a popular *corrido*. The song tells the story of a woman from the state of Durango who joined the Maderista army and fell in love with the sergeant. The details differ, some say her name was Adela Maldonado, as the caption for print 50 calls her, but there is no real evidence about the particular woman this legend developed around. Like the story, the *corrido* has many variations but they all tell a

basic narrative about a woman who was pretty and loved by the troops. A common version of the *corrido's* lyrics are as follows:[63]

La Adelita
En lo alto de un abrubta serranía
Acampado se encontraba un campamento,
Y una moza que valiente los seguía
Locamente enamorada de un sargento.
Popular entre la tropa era Adelita,
La mujer que el sargento idolatraba,
Porque además de ser valiente, era bonita
Y hasta el mismo coronel la respetaba.

Y pues sabía que decía, aquel que tanto la quería:

-Que si Adelita quisiera ser mi novia,
que si Adelita fuera mi mujer
le compraría un vestido de seda
para llevarla a bailar al cuartel-.

Y se oía, que decía
Aquel que tanto la quería:
-Que si Adelita se fuera conotro
la seguiría por tierra y por mar,
si por mar, en un buque de Guerra,
si por tierra, en un tren "military..."

(The) Adelita
In the high sierras
Camped were the soldiers
And a young woman who valiantly followed
Madly in love with the sergeant.
Popular among the troops was Adelita
The woman the sergeant adored
Because she was not only valiant but beautiful

So that even the colonel respected her.

And one could hear the lover say:
"If Adelita would be my sweetheart
If Adelita would be my wife
I would buy her a silk dress
And take her dancing to the military ball."

And one could hear the lover say:
"If Adelita left me for another
I would follow her through land and sea
If by sea in a warship
If by land on a military train…

The sergeant idolizes Adelita and the leaders of the army respect her for her beauty and selflessness. The lyrics present a romanticized portrait of the woman, she is a symbol of idealized femininity, bright and worthy of a man's love. She is described as a *soldadera* in popular culture and academic literature, and in *corridos* she is

[63] María Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican corrido: a feminist analysis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 108-109. Only a section of the lyrics have been included in the interest of space.

named specifically as a heroine of the Revolution who showed bravery in joining the troops.

The term is commonly believed to have begun with the revolutionary *corrido,* though there is not enough information to confirm a date of origination. It continues to be used in popular culture in Mexico and is the title of a 1937 film that tells the story of a woman who fights in the Revolution, though the film focuses on her romantic relationships. This theme continues in Mexican film throughout the 1940's and 50's. La Adelita is always considered a *soldadera* but the character's importance is equally centered on or even skewed towards romance and submission to men, making the connection a weak one. Every *soldadera* should not be considered equal to 'La Adelita,' which suggests a romantic or sexual relationship to a male soldier. The *corridos* sung about the mythical woman demonstrate this, characterizing her as an object of love and desire. The name Adelita was, and continues to be, synonymous with the term *soldadera* in popular culture but more importantly the caption written by Jimenez for print 50 executes the conflation:

> "The glorious "Soldadera" accompanied the troops in the most difficult moments. There was not one "Adelita" –the beautiful Adela Maldonado— there were many."

Jimenez does not even blink, so to speak, between the sentences. There is no qualification whatsoever, just a switch in terms demonstrating that the two figures are understood in this portfolio as one and the same. As a woman who is not involved in the Revolution in any form of labor, violence, or socio-political context

this is a curious conflation. In making Adelita a stereotype signifying a woman who follows the object of her affection to war out of love and loyalty the character is ideologically separated from the Revolution. In Aguirre's linocut the use of the grammatical article 'la' in the title *La Adelita* situates the woman not as a specific individual but as one of the many women who were loved and appreciated by the troops they travelled with. This is in line with the use of symbolic individuals to represent the masses used elsewhere in the portfolio. This is also conspicuously present in the caption to print 50. The two terms may generally collapse into one figure but visually Adelita is symbolically separated from the other figures of *soldaderas* in this portfolio through dress.

The depiction of her clothing is likely purposely neither the dress of a wealthy woman, nor the height of fashion in the revolutionary period. She wears a shawl and a head covering, marking her as not wealthy but still a respectable woman. Her feet are not visible. Her dress is long enough to cover them suggesting that the choice in the other images to exhibit the feet of the women was significant and purposeful. It is a stark departure from the other images, one that is repeated in print 49. In Yampolsky's image the central woman who faces the viewer frontally is dressed exceptionally decoratively for being in a military camp. She is more closely associated with the image of "La Adelita" than the other *soldaderas* because of her clothing and personal decoration. Though she wears a bandolier she has ribbons in her hair, appears to be wearing shoes and has a similarly detailed dress to the woman on the frontispiece. This is strikingly different from the other woman in the

foreground who turns away from the viewer squatting, wearing braids and who's appearance is more plain. Even more separated from this representation is the woman in the background who appears older with lanky hair worn long and a baggy dress over a less refined body. This depiction separates these two women, the central singing woman in print 49 and Adelita on the cover, from the class that the other *soldaderas* in this portfolio are positioned in. It does not delineate race in the way that the other representations of *soldaderas* do. Both Adelita and the singing woman in print 49 are pictured as more modern than their counterparts, appearing cleaner and more hopeful than the other women. Furthermore, they are more disconnected from the violence than even the other *soldaderas*.

The figure of La Adelita as a parallel representation of a *soldadera* represents societal pressures to disconnect women from soldiering or even acting as camp followers. While other images of *soldaderas* present an image of labor, even if it is mediated, images of Adelita position the woman revolutionary as more of a romantic and sexual partner. This construction also parallels sentiments that the patriotism of women was emotionally anchored, while the patriotism of men was intellectual.[64] Men acted, while women felt. Adelita is shown as emotional, wistfully waving goodbye or singing happily with men in camp. Print 49 physically and emotionally disconnects the women from the war, showing the two in the foreground in a moment of repose, singing happily. They are close to the soldiers

[64] Franco, *Plotting Women*, 103.

but not associated with battle or labor. On the frontispiece Adelita waves goodbye, looking longingly towards the men in the open door who wave back. She will not be fighting in the battle that the men are off to. It goes even further in that it pictures her as not even following the troops, completely decontextualizing her presence. The trope of La Adelita mediates the actions of the *soldadera* even more so than other representations by completely removing her from the troops, turning her into a symbolic figure representing the ideal of the loving, beautiful woman waiting for their return.

Conclusion

As objects that sought to connect a generation with its traumatic, ideological past the prints in the TGP's *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana* supported a reinvestment in the unfulfilled goals of the Revolution in popular contemporaneous Mexican culture. In the process of creating a politically and socially expedient unified narrative of the war they simplified more than just its history, they continued the reshaping of the story of women in the war to function within dominant narratives. Difference that was visible in the photographs that the TGP utilized was hidden in their representation of revolutionary women. Just as the violent phase of the Revolution was turned into an emblem of the movement's ideology the story of women was concurrently unified and manipulated into the increasingly mythologized story of the *soldadera.* The result being the image of

women in the conflict becoming symbolic while hiding the reality of their experiences and role in the war.

The prints that include revolutionary women present them to the viewer as being integral and deeply integrated in the war, if not in battle. They are positioned as integral to the nation - foundational characters, but part of a past that is in many ways not connected to the continuity of the revolutionary future. However there is a clear distinction made between combatants and revolutionary women. This seriously constrains their imagined labor, actions, and the individuality of the women who participated in the war in the minds of an audience who was likely too young to have experienced it first hand.

Epilogue

The picture of women revolutionaries from the 1910 Mexican Revolution in popular visual culture operated as a site from which collective memory was both constructed and transmitted. This study incorporated only a small portion of the available objects of visual culture that might have functioned as conduits of postmemory in mid twentieth-century Mexico. In thinking about genres that not only frame cultural discourse and knowledge of the past, but act as screens that project back at us our own needs the cinema would seem to offer a rich source of possibility. It would be useful to establish how the photographs and the portfolio discussed in this study interacted with other sites of postmemorial transmission within the larger socio-political climate.

The image of women revolutionaries in photographs from the war and prints in the TGP's *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana* portfolio offer a chance to follow the construction of the *soldadera* as a symbolic figure in early twentieth-century Mexican culture. The ways that this building of symbolism surrounding women revolutionaries has been foundational for contemporary images of the iconic *soldadera* needs further research. The figure has more recently been claimed by the Chicano/a movement of the 1960's, which used it as a rallying point for women in the movement. The film industry too has appropriated the image, representing the women as highly sexualized and dangerous departing from the earlier constructions of idealized domesticity.

The images of *soldaderas* in contemporaneous Mexican and America renderings suggests an even more iconic image than was presented in the 1940's, showing that the building of the *soldadera* into a symbolic figure did not end in the first half of the twentieth century. Images of *soldaderas* would seem to continue to act as screens projecting our contemporary idealizations of femininity. The social implications of these shifts and the ways in which the image of these women have evolved deserve greater attention.

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Appendix A

Figure 1. José Clemente Orozco, *Soldaderas*, 1920. Oil on Canvas. Original Collection of J. M. Puig Cassauranc; Collection of Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico City.

Figure 2. Alfredo Zalce, "La Soldadera" No. 43, *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*, 1947. Linoleum cut. University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque.

Figure 3a. (Recto) Unknown, *Untitled (Señorita Ma Gonzales Garcia)*, n.d. Photographic postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

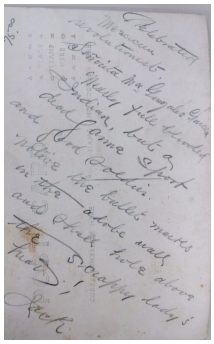

Figure 3b. (Verso) Postcard with handwritten note (United States Postal Service). Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

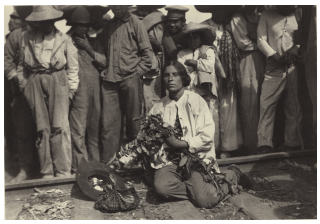

Figure 4. Unknown, *Maria Zavala arrodillada sobre vias del ferrocaril*, n.d. SINAFO-Fototeca Nacional del INAH, # 6219.

Figure 5. Jerónimo Hernández, *Soldadera, Mexico City*, April 12. Fondo Casasola, SINAFO-Fototeca Nacional del INAH, #5760.

Figure 6. Unknown, *Untitled*, n.d. Fondo Casasola, SINAFO-Fototeca Nacional del INAH.

Figure 7. Unknown, *Villa en la silla presidencial*, 1914. Fondo Casasola, SINAFO-Fototeca Nacional del INAH.

Figure 8. Unknown, *Untitled (Comandante Barrañada)*, 1913. Photographic postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Figure 9. L.R. Pimentel, *Untitled, No. 118 (General Benjamin Argumedo*), n.d. Photographic postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Figure 10. Unknown, *Two mounted Villista Soldaderas*, circa 1914. Sunset Magazine, 1914. Image source: *Soldaderas in the Mexican Military*, by Elizabeth Salas, Figure 12.

Figure 11. Unknown, *Soldaderas under the command of Adolfo de la Huerta*, 1925. Fondo Casasola, Fototeca del INAH, Pachuca Hidalgo.

Figure 12. Unknown, *Romualdo Saeriz, Crack Shot of Mexico, 29*, n.d. Photographic Postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Figure 13. Unknown, *Cooking for Mexican Army*, 302, n.d. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

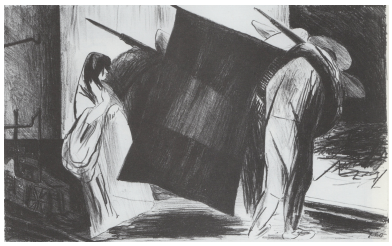
Figure 14. José Clemente Orozco, *La Bandera*, 1928. Lithograph. Printer: George C. Miller. Edition: 100 prints; some copies unnumbered; artist's proofs.

Figure 15a. (Recto) Antonio Garduño, *Una Zapatista, no. 465*, n.d. Photographic postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

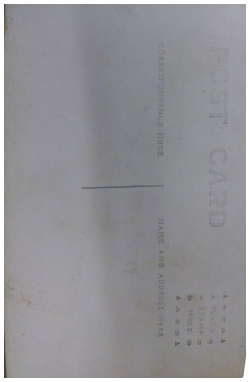

Figure 15b. (Verso) Blank postcard (United States Postal Service). Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Figure 16. John Vanderlyn, *Landing of Columbus*, 1846. Oil on canvas. Rotunda, United States Capitol Building, Washington D.C., commissioned for and placed in 1847.

Figure 17. Luca Giordano, *Archangel Michael Hurls the Rebellious Angels into the Abyss*, 1660-1665. Oil on canvas. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, inv. GG 350. Erich Lessing/ART RESOURCE, N.Y.

Figure 18. . Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830. Oil on canvas. Louvre-Lens, Pas-de-Calais, France.

Figure 19. Hugo Brehme, *Emiliano Zapata, Cuernavaca, Morelos*, May 1911. Fondo Casasola, SINAFO – Fototeca Nacional del INAH, # 63464.

Figure 20. Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Portrait of Louis XIV*, 18th century. Oil on canvas. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

Figure 21. Unknown (Walter H. Horne), *A scene along the trail of Pancho Villa in Mexico*, 3013, n.d. Walter H. Horne Co., El Paso Texas. Collection of Mexican

Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Figure 22. D. W. Hoffman, Red Cross, circa 1915. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Figure 23. Unknown*, Untitled (Officer with pistol)*, n.d. Fondo Casasola, SINAFO-Fototeca Nacional del INAH.

Figure 24. Unknown, Untitled (Soldier on train), n.d. Fondo Casasola, SINAFO-Fototeca Nacional del INAH.

Figure 25. Unknown, *Dead Mexican Bandits*, n.d. Photographic postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Figure 26. Unknown, *Executing Bandits in Mexico, 854*, n.d. Photographic postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Figure 27. Unknown, *Burning the bodies of dead bandits at Columbus NM*, n.d. Photographic postcard. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Figure 28. David Alfaro Siqueiros, Detail of *The Agrarian Revolution of Emiliano Zapata*, (from *Porfirianism to the Revolution*) 1926. Fresco. Museo Nacional de Historia, Castillo de Chapultepec, Mexico City, Mexico.

Figure 29. . José Clemente Orozco, *Zapatistas*, 1931. Oil on canvas. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art New York. © 2014 José Clemente Orozco/ artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ SOMAAP, Mexico.

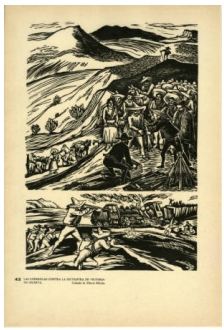

Figure 30. Alberto Beltrán, "Las guerrillas contra la dictadura de Victoranio Huerta" No. 43, *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*, 1947. Linoleum cut. University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque.

Figure 31. Mariana Yampolsky, "Vivac de Revolucionarios" No. 49, *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*, 1947. Linoleum cut. University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque.

Figure 32. Ignacio Aguirre, "La Adelita," cover to *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*, 1947. Linoleum cut. University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque.

Figure 33. . Fernando Castro Pacheco, "Aquiles Serdán y su familia inician en Puebla la Revolución armada. 18 Noviembre 1910" No. 22, *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana*, 1947. Linoleum cut. University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque.

Figure 34. José Clemente Orozco, *Rear Guard*, 1929. Lithograph. Printer: George C. Miller, 100 prints; some copies unnumbered.

Figure 35. José Clemente Orozco, *Mujer Grávida,* 1929. Lithograph. Printer: George C. Miller, 100 prints, counterproof; some copies unnumbered.

Figure 36. . Unknown, *Untitled (Soldiers resting with rifles)*, n.d. Fondo Casasola, SINAFO- Fototeca Nacional del INAH, # 5172.

Figure 37. Charles B. Waite, *Young girl posing, Mexico*, circa 1900. Archivo General de la Naciónal, Fondo Propiedad Artística y Literaria, Colección C. B. Waite, sobre 77.

Figure 38. José Clemente Orozco, *Turistas y aztecas*, 1935. Lithograph. Printer: Jesús Arteaga, 167 prints.

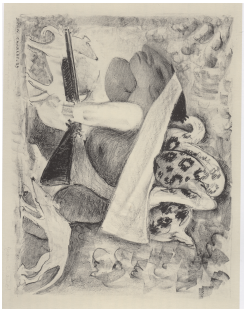

Figure 39. . Jean Charlot, *Leopard Hunter*, 1929. Lithograph. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. © 2014 Jean Charlot/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Figure 40. Clara Mairs, *Mexico City*, 1938. Etching and aquatint.

Figure 41. Diego Rivera, *The Liberated Earth with Natural Forces Controlled by Man*, 1927. Fresco. Escuela Nacional de Chapingo, Mexico. © 2011 Banco de México Diego Rivera & Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, México, D.F./ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photograph by Schalkwijk/Art Resource, New York.

Figure 42. Unknown, *Untitled (Battle damaged urban building),* n.d. Collection of Mexican Revolution photographs, Collection 026. UCR Library, Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Figure 43. Francisco Díaz León, T*he Pilgrims,* 1930. Etching with aquatint. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Jean Charlot, 1931.

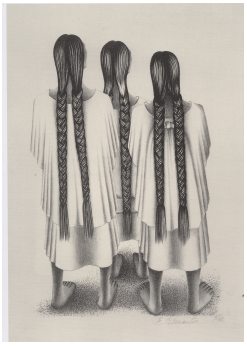

Figure 44. Francisco Dosamantes, *Three Yalaltecan Women*, 1946. Lithograph. Museum of Fine Arts Boston. Gift of W. G. Russell Allen.

Figure 45. Diego Rivera, *Sugar Cane*, 1931. Fresco. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Cameron Morris, 1943. © 2011 Banco de México Diego Rivera & Frida Kahlo Museums Trust México, D.F./ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.