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# Feeling images: subjectivities and affective experience in the Egyptian revolution

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Feeling Images: Subjectivities and Affective Experience in the Egyptian Revolution

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ABSTRACT

During the Egyptian Revolution, beginning in 2011 and continuing throughout this project,, images were used to garner support for or against various movements. When viewers disagreed with the version of events suggested by the images, these viewers remained unmoved by them even if the image depicted violence or death. In order to understand how this is possible, this work undertakes a study of the intimate relationship between affect and the viewer's point-of view, also known as their "subjectivity," in the context of images from the Egyptian Revolution. The participants of this project were not passive observers, but rather almost instantaneously created meaning for the images based on the contents of the image, narratives they had heard about the image, and their own personal experiences. Each interview resulted in a clear pattern of expressiveness toward images that matched their subjectivities and indifference towards images that did not. They accepted and emoted about images that they interpreted as supportive of their perspective of the world; they rejected and dismissed images that they interpreted as contradictive of this perspective. Images that clashed with their subjectivity threatened the legitimacy of the ideologies they ascribed to and the groups they were loyal to. Therefore, viewers were indifferent towards images of violence or death because acceptance of these images involved acceptance of the world they suggested, which would threaten the legitimacy of the world that they were invested in. These results cast light on the nature of human bias, the creation of "us and them" mentalities, and the indifference towards the suffering of "the other." It also demonstrates that photo elicitation can be used as more than simply a catalyst for interviews on topics unrelated to images; it can consider the fundamental nature of the human experience of imagery.

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# Chapter I- Introduction

## 1. Introduction and Research Questions

Viewers of images are not passive observers. They create what they see by means of interpretation. Who a person is inevitably becomes an essential part of what they see and feel when they view an image. Egyptians' considerations of pictures and videos from their recent period of social and political change exemplify what it means to "see" images. This period became known to Egyptians as "*al Thawra,*" or "The Egyptian Revolution" of 2011. It involved the distribution of and conversations about many famous images that were interpreted in a multitude of ways by a multitude of viewers. Each viewer saw these images through the lens of their subjectivity, and therefore saw and felt very different things in each image. If they saw a world that agreed with their subjectivity in the image, they embraced it. If they found that the image clashed with their subjectivity, they treated the image with indifference or disdain.

Haisam and Mary are two Egyptians that exemplify this trend. Over the course of this project, I met with them and several other Egyptians to discuss the Egyptian Revolution and its images. This thesis explores the intimate relationship between who they were and how they felt about images. Haisam is a Muslim man who owns several businesses in Cairo, most of which were negatively affected by the lack of tourism in Egypt after the protests in January of 2011. He attended the initial protests on the 25$^{th}$ of January in *Tahrir* (Liberation) Square, and emphasized that this original protest was against police brutality, not former President Hosni Mubarak. He left this protest as it grew and changed its goals to include the removal of Mubarak from presidency, which he considered unwise and destructive. When he returned to look down into Tahrir Square from a bridge on the 28$^{th}$ of January, he described it: "*like civil war in Cambodia… fires and destruction.*" Haisam's deceased father held a high rank in the Egyptian military, along with several of his uncles. He defended the actions of the military and expressed frustration that Egyptians were never satisfied, regardless of how well the military

handled things. He described an extreme distrust of the then current President Mohammed Morsi, who was elected after Mubarak's removal. Haisam said that Morsi had accomplished nothing during his time in power besides pushing the agenda of the Muslim Brotherhood, the religious/political group that he represented.

I met with Haisam to look at and talk about images from the Egyptian Revolution. When we considered images that he saw as supportive of his beliefs and values, he described them in an emotive and enthusiastic fashion. As we considered images that clashed with his beliefs and values, he was notably indifferent and dismissive of the images. Haisam presented images of people dropping projectiles from their balconies onto people standing in the streets near Tahrir Square. He emphasized how thoughtless and indiscriminate these protesters against Mubarak were. He consistently focused on the actions of violent protesters in these images and described the police as passive and reactive. He also presented an image of an army tank, explaining that it reminded him of how the military was the only source of security during this early period of chaos. He was dismissive of an image of Tahrir Square filled with people, saying that most of the people who had filled the square were only neutral sightseers, and not really against Mubarak or condoning the violence. He was emotive while considering an image of a man bleeding from the head, characterizing it as "*a very horrible story*" and establishing that "*This man was being beaten by the Muslim Brotherhood.*"

Mary is a Coptic Christian woman who was born before World War Two and spent much of her life working as a librarian. She described feeling a strong connection to Copts, Liberals, and Egypt in general, and for this reason she chose to continue living in Egypt despite several of her family members moving away after the Revolution. She did not consider herself physically fit enough to attend protests, but supported most demonstrations against Mubarak and Morsi wholeheartedly. Concerning the protests against Mubarak, she pounded the table as she insisted that they were not about religion, but rather nationalism. Her discussion concerning the military generals, who ruled Egypt for a short period after Mubarak stepped down, focused on unjust episodes of violence against protesters. She was also distrustful towards Morsi, who was president at the time, and his political affiliation, the Muslim Brotherhood. She described the history of the Muslim Brotherhood and said that its founder had a twisted view of Islam. She

characterized most followers of the Muslim Brotherhood as *"brain-washed,"* and expressed a desire to save them from their ignorance. Concerning the upcoming protests against the Muslim Brotherhood, she described feeling both hope for "*better days*" and "*terrible anticipation*" of continued bloodshed. Whatever happened, she said that she would "*feel their pain*" regardless of who was being hurt.

I met with Mary to discuss images from the Egyptian Revolution. Mary focused on images that, to her, represented violence or the results of violence. She emphasized the crimes committed against Copts and Egyptians in general, as well as the unity, defiance, and solidarity of these people against their assailants. She often described feeling the pain she perceived others feeling when viewing images of violence against protesters. She cried out suddenly upon viewing an image of a protester being run over by a man on a camel. She said: "*It hurts me*" while looking at a picture of young protesters' coffins being carried away, and tears filled her eyes while discussing an image of people who were killed during protests.

It is clear from Haisam and Mary's examples that *who they are*, their "subjectivity," had a significant relationship with *how they felt* about these images from the Revolution. This thesis addresses a number of specific questions concerning this relationship:

- What do the participants see when they view images of the Egyptian Revolution? In what ways do they find them meaningful?
- What sort of relationship exists between their subjectivity and their affective experiences of these images?
- Can multiple participants interpret the same image differently?
- During social movements, do the ideologies and affiliations within subjectivities have certain affective experiences that are acceptable and others that are not?
- What role do subjectivities play in influencing how affect is expressed or felt?
- How does participation in protests shape the participants' affective experience or the images they contribute? Why are those who stayed home still invested in how the images are interpreted?

- How does affective experience differ when viewing violence perpetrated against someone perceived to be of an opposing position rather than someone they feel solidarity with?
- How did they treat images that were commonly used to discredit their beliefs or values about the Revolution?

In order to answer these questions, I undertook an exploratory study of the relationship between subjectivity and affective experience in the context of images from the Egyptian Revolution and the people who viewed them. In the moment of viewing an image, this relationship was clear in viewers' interpretations, connections, and deflections. These concepts are essential to this thesis, so it is essential that I define them here. Additionally, I provide a chronology of important events from the Egyptian Revolution in order to begin describing this thesis' context.

### A) Terminology

In this thesis, "subjectivity" refers to the political affiliations, personal connections, biology, economic position, beliefs, memories, and morals that make up a person's point of view. The social context that they perceive themselves as inhabiting is constantly in flux based on their surroundings. Thus, a person's subjectivity is a constantly changing and transforming point from which they view the world around them; it is one of this thesis' tasks to explore the various aspects that define this point for each participant. On the other hand, when I refer to "affective experiences," I am speaking about a complex interplay of senses, cognition, affect and emotion. Affective experience, as I describe in more detail below, is based in both physical and cultural worlds. According to some perspectives, the physical provides the "gut feeling" while the cultural provides the syntactical ideas with which to translate these feelings. The aim of this thesis is to consider how subjectivity and affective experience are intimately connected.

In order to explore this phenomenon, I consider subjectivity and affective experience within the context of imagery. Images inspire affective experience in the individuals who view them, but each affective experience is built on the viewer's

subjectivity. Different individuals can look at the same image of war, but due to their different subjectivities, one might see condemnation where the other sees glorification, one might be depressed while the other is encouraged. The prevalence of affect and subjectivity in the viewing of images made imagery a useful context for this thesis.

Affect and viewers' subjectivities are essential elements for their interaction with imagery. This interaction begins with interpretation. A person views an image and almost instantly calls upon various aspects of their subjectivity, as well the contents of the image, to create meaning for the image. This is done by means of affect rather than a lengthy cognitive process. Based on the meaning they are able to create for the image, their affective experience continues in one of two directions. The first involves expressiveness concerning how the viewer feels and why they feel that way. I refer to this behavior with the verb "connecting." The second form of interaction lacked the emotive qualities of the first and viewers instead focus on discrediting the image and avoiding discussion of how they feel. I refer to this behavior with the verb "deflecting." Interpretation, connecting, and deflecting are explored in detail in this thesis in order to come to an understanding of the intimate relationship between subjectivity and the affective experience of images.

## B) Chronology of Events

This research project makes use of images from within the specific context of the recent "Egyptian Revolution." This period of political and social change in Egypt began on the 25th of January, 2011, lead to the "18 Days of Protest" and, according to many Egyptians, continues to this day. It involved/involves the more visible alterations to Egypt's leadership and way the country is run as well as a significant transformation in the way Egyptians think about politics and their capacity to cause change. I will define "social movement" as a period of change in the way a country is run and in the way people see themselves in relation to politics as evidenced by protest activity. In the interest of clarity, throughout this thesis I refer to "The Revolution" as a continuing phenomenon.

The "18 Days of Protest" refers to the sequence of protests that began on 25 January 2011 and ended on 11 February when President Mubarak resigned. At this point,

the Supreme Council of Armed Forces, or SCAF, led Egypt until a civilian president could be elected. The "Maspero Demonstration" refers to an attempted sit-in by Coptic Christians at the Maspero television building in downtown Cairo on 9 October 2011. This resulted in a violent clash with military and police forces and has also been called "The Maspero Massacre" by protestors. It became a rallying point for many who wanted to see the end of SCAF's control of the government. The "Mohammed Mahmoud Battle" occurred about a month later on 18 November in Tahrir Square. It is named after Mohammed Mahmoud Street, where significant fighting took place, and also resulted in the distrust of SCAF. During the "Port Said Incident," fans of Ahly and Masry football teams clashed after a game on 1 February, 2012. The 70 football fans who died in the chaos were considered by many to be martyrs of the Revolution, as many accused the security forces of intentionally not intervening in the fight as a response to the football fans' involvement in the protests against SCAF.

There were many protests and sit-ins during the presidency of Mohamed Morsi, culminating around a constitutional declaration on 22 November 2012 and the two-year anniversary of the Mubarak protests in 2013. The "*Tamarod*" (Rebel) protests began on the 30th of June, 2013, and were instrumental in removing President Morsi from office and the Muslim Brotherhood from power. The fieldwork that I conducted for this thesis ended two days before the Rebel protests began, so the images and descriptions of interviews that I use are from the Revolution up to this point.

The Egyptian Revolution is filled with conflicting beliefs and ideas. It has also created, and continues to create, images that contribute to these conflicts and oftentimes elicit passionate responses. This inspirational quality is tied to their context and the subjectivity of the viewer. With conflicts making use of images and conflicting subjectivities, the Egyptian Revolution is the ideal context for this thesis.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

I will now consider a variety of texts and ideas that are foundational to this thesis' methodology. I begin with a general consideration of literature concerning the nature of images and individual subjective interpretations of them. This provides support for my description of photo elicitation, which was an essential part of my methodology. I then

describe the perspectives on affect and emotion that informed my analysis of affective experiences. Finally, I summarize some of the literature on affective experience in social movements, including the EPA spectrum, fairness, and moral shock.

## *A) Images and Subjectivity*

As the methodology of this project focuses on images, it is important that we first consider what an "image" is. Belting (2011:9) points out the duality of the western Anthropological usage of the word. "We live with images, we comprehend the world in images," and this internal aspect is connected to the external production and use of physical images that inhabit our social world. Mitchell (2005:8) points out that "image" can refer to both a physical object and an imaginary, internal thing. He suggests that these two definitions can come together to define pictures and video as images that have found a medium.

Mitchell (2005:8) goes on to describe the human tendency to speak about images as if they were living things. They do not just imitate life; they take up a life of their own. Consider that physical images have authors, and are therefore a glimpse through someone else's perspective. However, the author's intentions do not completely determine the meaning of an image; a picture of military destruction could be viewed as unmasking an unnecessary conflict or embodying an unavoidable struggle, depending on the perspective of the viewer. While the author of the image determines what is within the picture or video's "frame," they have no control over how viewers interpret the final product. Pictures have their own careers, determined by the communities that interpret them (Sontag 2003:38). Images gain the "life" that Mitchell speaks about from a multitude of interpretations and re-considerations by human beings, each investing their own perceptions into the image.

I am discussing the nature of images because people's affective experience of them is linked to the very nature of "image." Images are more than physical representations of other objects; they are given life by the personal experiences, imaginations, and cultural discourses that people use to interpret them. The life of images is built upon the nature of individual human experiences; this is a foundational idea out of which this thesis grew.

Pink (2001:82) asserts that images are made meaningful in the subjective perspective of the viewer. This meaning is produced by individuals who interpret what the author has placed within the images through the lens of their personal experiences, knowledge and cultural discourses. Ginsburg (1995:64) describes the subjectivity of images when viewed from different perspectives as "The Parallax Effect." Parallax refers to the multiplicity of ways that something can be described by different people standing on different socio-cultural foundations of understanding. Ginsburg argues for a revision of the ethnographic film genre involving a stronger emphasis on "indigenous film" so as to build up the genre as a means to consider parallax views of the world. My project essentially considers how the Parallax Effect is created by subjectivities and affective experience.

Sliwinski (2011:9) suggests that the spread of the idea of universal human rights was built on a foundation of the circulation of images of distant events. Viewers all over the world view images of injustice in places they have never been. Experiencing these images leads to "passionate engagements" with the event, creating a shared "complex constellation of feelings" amongst a multitude of viewers. However, these feelings are only felt by certain viewers. Many viewers maintain ambivalence to the suffering they see depicted in these images.

In her book, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Sontag (2003:11) describes the subjective nature of our consideration of the pain of other people. She does this by considering, among other things, photos of war sent back to be viewed by a civilian populous. Do violent images of human death move people in a universally consistent manner? Sontag considers the many ways that pictures can be used and given meaning by their viewers. She finds that images that clash with cherished pieties are often considered to be staged fabrications by those who ascribe to the opposite side of a conflict. Thus, the cherished pieties of the viewer, an aspect of their subjectivity, are essential to how an image is understood and what narratives about the image are embraced.

In the second chapter of *Formations of the Secular*, Asad (2003:67) provides a potential explanation for this variance in the consideration of the pain of others. He asserts that pain is not a private experience, but rather one that can be communicated socially so that others can experience it. However, assessing evidence of someone's pain

(spoken words, facial expressions, vocal patterns) is not the only requirement. A particular kind of relationship with the person in pain is also necessary in order to experience their suffering. For instance, a mother feels the pain of her suffering child because, "It is a practical condition of who she and her suffering child are" (2003:84). The necessity of a particular kind of relationship means that there is an element of choice to experiencing this pain; an individual can chose whether or not to continue living in this relationship. Asad also points out that this is not just true of pain, but also pleasure.

This approach is easily applied to the consideration of images. Viewers of images can feel the pain (or pleasure) of a person depicted in an image. However, the experience of the depicted person must be communicated adequately and the viewer must have a particular type of relationship with the depicted person. The nature of this "particular type" or relationship is a subject that this thesis seeks to explore through a consideration of subjectivity.

The variety of ways that an image can be interpreted depending on the narratives that are embraced can lead to a "battle over memory," Gribbon (2012:18) suggests. Groups and individuals seek to mobilize, or undermine the mobilization, of people in the name of a cause they consider worthy, especially during periods of political and social change. An image becomes involved in this battle as people vouch for different narratives that interpret the image in a way that promotes their group or ideology.

Jenssen's book *Behind the Eye* (2009:144) considers the uses of film and imagery for research in the social sciences. She discusses the moral appeal of images depicting faces of the other. She suggests that ethics come from "small scale situations… face to face… here and now." For the viewer, seeing an image of someone's face asserts the differences between the viewer and the viewed, but also reveals a common unity, which awakens feelings of responsibility. She also suggested that this "seeing" of the person in the image is not done with the eyes, but rather the entire body. The viewer considers images not just with sight, but with feeling throughout their body. Jenssen also points out that this seeing/feeling when viewing images of the other will not necessarily overcome those who have aligned themselves against the people in the image. In this thesis, the moral appeal of faces gives insight into the smiling portraits of deceased protesters that were so important in mobilizing support for various protests. Additionally, her ideas

about the "seeing" and "feeling" are a vital part of my consideration of the participants' affective experience of images.

In *The Corporeal Image*, MacDougall (2005:23) considers the relationship between images and the body of the viewer. He found that expressions of affect upon viewing an image are not just reports of feeling, but a means to feel. The body of the viewer imitates what they see in the image, as if they had taken on the physical qualities of what it depicts. Feedback from this mimicry creates the appropriate feelings. He suggested that, to a certain extent, this mimicry was involuntary. In this thesis, expressions as part of the action of feeling are an essential part of my consideration of the participants' affective experiences. Their expressions were an aspect of their experience of the images; thus it was especially notable when they avoided such expressions.

### C) Human Experience: Affect and Emotion

Anthropology has much literature to contribute to this thesis on the definitions of affect and emotion and their relationship. Some parse out human experiences into distinct categories in order to highlight, for example, affect's visceral qualities and the culturally constructed nature of emotion. However, these categories and the relationships between them vary from scholar to scholar, and some have suggested that Anthropologists should avoid this categorization altogether. In this section, I will consider these definitions and explain which approach this thesis will take.

**1) The Nature of Affect**

The definition of "affect" varies amongst different scholars. Some researchers, including Sedgwick (2003:93) and Lutz and White (1986:417), spend time creating distinctions and cause-and-effect relationships between what they have defined as affect, emotion, feeling, sentiment, personality, mood, attitude, etc. Many who consider these concepts also make an effort to differentiate biological from social, universal from cultural, and private from public (EcElhinny 2010:310). Besnier (1990:421) suggests that Anthropologists studying affect should be suspicious of this categorization, as it establishes Western ideologies of personhood and human experience as universal. These structures of affective experience do not effectively translate cross-culturally. Russell and Barrett (1999:805) and Besnier suggest that it is useful to transcend this preoccupation

with distinctions by adopting a "broad (but malleable)" definition of affect (1990:421). This is the approach that this thesis takes; I use a single term, "affect," to refer to feelings that occur throughout the human body that can then be defined based on the labels provided by culture.

Affect is an essential element of "mimesis." Through an in-depth discussion of the practices of the Cuna Indians, Taussig (1993:130) explores the nature of mimesis, which is the human faculty to copy, imitate, explore difference, and become the other. He finds that alterity (otherness) is not a thing in and of itself, but a relationship that can be explored though the use of mimesis. Gaines (1999:90) presents "political mimesis," a phenomenon that occurs when events taking place in an image elicit physical reactions in the audience. The bodies of spectators mimic the bodies they see on the screen. For example, a horror film might make them scream and a sad film might make them cry. Gaines suggests that certain documentaries of historical events seek to elicit in their audiences a near-involuntary desire to "carry on that same struggle." Many of the images from the Revolution that were part of this project triggered a mimetic response in the participants, confirming Gaines' findings. For example, photos of people who have been beaten by police triggered mimetic pain in viewers, and videos of masses of protestors instilled a sense of togetherness and a desire to join them in protesting. My discussions with the participants included a lot of mimetic language, such as, "*It breaks your heart… It hurts*" (Amina 2,2,6). This mimesis in viewers is essential to the analysis of the affective experiences of images in this thesis. Participants experiencing the feelings that they saw others experiencing in an image was a strong indicator of connecting.

Slovic (2004:311) draws attention to the role that affect plays in risk analysis. He suggests that "feelings" are not irrational as some experts on risk analysis have insisted. Instead, they are an essential part of decision making that grants people the ability to respond more quickly to stimuli than drawn out cognition. Affect is an integral part of the human experience and it is apparent that the picture Slovic and Gaines (1999:90) paint of responses motivated by affect was prevalent during the many protests of the Egyptian Revolution. It was also clear that affect played an important part in the participants' experience of images. In order to better understand this concept, scholarly work on the socially constructed nature of affect needs to be considered.

**2) Socially Constructed Aspects of Feeling**

Some have attempted to differentiate the socially constructed from the universal aspects of affect. Sedgwick (2003:93) referred to "emotions" as the socially constructed means of interpreting the universal physical and mental phenomenon of "affect." Lutz and White (1986:417) did the reverse, advocating for universal "emotions" amongst an overlay of socially constructed "affect." Although I have established that exploring these differentiations it is not this thesis' purpose, there is certainly necessary that I consider the socially constructed element of my "broad (but malleable)" approach to affect.

The commonality between Lutz and White's (1986:417) and Sedgwick's (2003:93) dichotomies is that initial "feelings" in the body are processed via a socially constructed apparatus. For the sake of clarity, I will refer to the latter as "emotion," as Sedgwick does, for the remainder of this section. Different cultures construct this emotional apparatus in different ways; the extent of this variation is a matter that Russell (1991:444) considers. He analyzes the similarities and differences in the categories for emotion that several cultures use and considers to what extent these categories are universal or culture-specific. He concludes that:

> Thus, neither the word 'emotion' nor words for even alleged basic emotions, such as anger and sadness, are universal. Different lines of evidence converge on this conclusion: intensive ethnographic studies of specific emotion words, the large number of reports by ethnographers of noticeable differences in emotion words, the large variation across languages in the number of emotion words, the experimental evidence of differences in what were previously taken to be translation equivalents, and the small difference between Indo-European and non-Indo-European languages in categorization of facial expressions (Russell 1991:444).

Shweder (1985:182) suggests that, although cultures have uniquely defined emotions, they all use the same base human emotional framework to create these definitions. Discourses within each individual culture shape and define which emotions are appropriate or expected in certain situations. Thus, the set of universal emotions available are muted or amplified in various ways by different cultures. These have been called "hypocognized" and "hypercognized" emotions respectively. The individuals

within the culture often misinterpret the muted or hypocognized emotions as something else, like illness (Levy 1984:214) (Lutz 1986:417).

The culturally defined nature of emotion can be exaggerated, however. Thamm (1992:649) suggests a social-action theory by which to label emotions. He builds this on the assumption that social-action systems of expectations and sanctions can determine how people label their emotions. I find Thamm's goal to use the nature of particular, continuously evolving structural systems to predict the emotional structure of individual actors to be simplistic and problematic. It places an unnecessarily large emphasis on social structure's part in producing a person's emotions, and beyond this, even their personality. Thamm ignores complex histories, subjectivities and affiliations in favor of an overly simplistic, deterministic approach.

In this thesis, I considered images from the Egyptian Revolution in an effort to understand how they inspired feelings in viewers. This power to inspire is the power of affect, which had to be translated into culturally defined categories in order to be communicated to me during interviews. This is why my methodology seeks to approach the participants' experiences of images through a variety of different questions rather than simply asking them how they feel.

### D) Affective Experiences in Social Movements

There is a notable library of literature on the occurrence and usefulness of affect during social movements. Many of these ideas can be useful to my understanding of affective experience, especially when situating it within the context of the Egyptian Revolution.

#### 1) Evaluation, Potency, Activity

"Affect Control Theory" is a form of symbolic interactionism. It considers culturally accepted definitions of identities and feelings that result from our expectations being met or not met. These identities and feelings can be organized into three dimensions: Evaluation (good or bad) Potency (powerful or weak) Activity (animated or passive) (EPA). Social movements must situate their depiction of themselves and their opponents amongst these EPA spectrums (Smith-Lovin 1990:238) (Jasper and Goodwin 2007:625) (Heise 1989:10).

During the 18 Days of Protest, protestors' depictions of the Egyptian Revolution and the Mubarak Regime fit within the EPA spectrums. For example, they often distributed images of Egyptians that they believed had been killed in clashes with police; they called these people martyrs. According to the protesters, these images situated their opponents (the police) as "bad" on the evaluation scale, "powerful" on the potency scale, and "animated" on the activity scale by depicting the horrible beating of Khalid Said (Eltantawy and Wiest 2011:1215). Simultaneously, these images depicted the deceased as weak and passive. The Mubarak Regime also defined itself and its opponents using the EPA spectrums. It made use of its influence over state television to depict the protestors as dangerous to the stability of the country (Bell 2012). For example, they told their own version of the death of Khalid Said, during which Khalid Said was confronted by police about drug trafficking and attempted to escape justice by swallowing the evidence of his crime. This portrayed the protestors as bad (involved in drug trafficking) and animated (actively seeking to avoid justice and break the law) (Wedeman 2010).

**2) Fairness**

Fairness is another important element of affect in social movements. People have substantive and procedural norms of justice, meaning that they can see either outcomes or procedures as unfair (Camerer 2001:24; Jasper 1999:154). This unfairness can be blamed on structural positions, their own characteristics, or the actions of others. The latter category is ripe to cause righteous anger and lead to collective action. This blame brings together cognitive thought and affect (Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina 1982:15). The 18 Days of Protest involved a lot of blame. Protestors described government leaders as hoarding large amounts of money for themselves (Fahmy 2012). It would seem that the protestors were most concerned with the unfairness of the outcome of the government. After all, one of their slogans was "Bread, Freedom, and Social Justice" which are all outcomes of a fair government system. They blamed the actions of others for this unfairness, and sought reform by removing these people from office.

It is important to note that unfairness does not just refer to money. Moral principles of fairness can be violated by religious, political, business or community means (Jasper 1999:154). People do not just follow morals because they are afraid of consequences. For whatever reason, they do it because it feels good. On this basis, one

person might approve or disapprove of someone's actions, including their own (Elster 1999:145). When considering their own actions, these can lead to pride or shame. When considering someone else's actions, these can lead to solidarity or "moral shock."

### 3) Moral Shock

Moral shock involves the sense of outrage that fills a person when they are given information that leads them to see that their surroundings were not what they had previously thought. It leads to fear and anger. If fear dominates, it paralyzes possible participants in social movements. If anger dominates, the likelihood of mobilization is high. Many political activists work hard to create moral shock and direct outrage and anger towards the opposition (Luker 1984:137).

People are rarely moved to act in the name of complete strangers. Moral shocks are more likely to affect and mobilize people who already have a connection to the victims of unfairness (Nepstad and Smith 2001:158). However, in unique cases, it is possible to create outrage about the plight of an unfamiliar entity. Young (2001:99) presented the case of American Evangelical Protestants calling for the end of slavery in the 1830s. They had no solidarity with slaves, but a shift in "emotion culture" meant that slavery changed from a metaphor for sinfulness to simply sinful. New moral sensibilities lead a group down new paths of cognitive thought and possibly to moral shock that was not previously possible.

Were the moral shocks within the revolution the result of a shift in emotion culture? It would not appear so. Examples like Khalid Said may not have been public figures in Egypt, but they were not as un-relatable to the average Egyptian as the American slaves were to Evangelical Protestants. Said was an ordinary young Egyptian man who (according to some) posted a video of Egyptian police on the Internet (Wedeman 2010). The relatable nature of Khali Said could explain how his photos were such a powerful moral shock without needing a shift in emotion culture. Additionally, before the Egyptian Revolution, martyrs were already known to be a source of powerful moral shock in the emotional culture of the Middle East (Dorraj 1997:489). Martyrdom has been a powerful idea amongst Muslim societies for centuries.

### E) Similar Research

Works on the Egyptian Revolution itself have included considerations of poetry (Saad 2012:63), youth (Shahine 2011:1), social media (el-Tantawy 2011), social class (Holmes 2012:391), and its effect on the social worlds of small villages (Abu-Lughod 2011:21). However, according to my consideration of recent literature, no research using methods based on photo elicitation have been done concerning images from the Egyptian Revolution. Of course, there have been somewhat similar methods used concerning other images in other places.

Snyder and Ammons' (1993:111) study of college baseball players considers the nature of affective arousal in sports situations. They make use of interviews with players that consider images of their team practicing and playing. They find that most players are focused on managing and maintaining a certain optimal level of arousal during play, and that, while these affective experiences are communal, the players are individually motivated to improve their personal performance.

Harper and Faccioli (2000:23) set out to explore how women in Italy and the U.S.A. interpreted Italian advertisements using an approach that calls upon semiotics in addition to ethnography. They consider the symbols that advertisements make use of in order to be memorable, but use ethnographic research methods to explore the cultural meanings of these images. They find that American viewers read sexism into the ads and focused on the presence of nudity while Italians give a more complex assessment of sociology and economics. This study provides an understanding of the differences in interpretation between these two groups, as well as glimpse into how unfamiliar images from other cultures are viewed.

Riches and Dawson (1998:121) consider the role that images play in parents' grieving and remembering of their "lost" children. They met with these parents and discussed the life of their children alongside photographs and other artifacts of the child's life. They discovered that these images were of considerable importance in accepting the loss of a child, as well as a vehicle for "personal internal conversations" with them (Riches and Dawson 1998:124). Parents use these images to integrate the past lives of their deceased children with their present reality in a meaningful way; for example, using

certain images to represent the life of the child to family members or friends who had never met the child.

## 3. Methodology

This was a participatory research project; the images discussed in this thesis were selected by the participants. Each participant was asked to contribute approximately five to ten images from the Egyptian Revolution that were the most powerful and meaningful to them personally. The interview method for this research consisted of two parts, conducted on separate occasions. The first part was a conversation intended to help me understand the participant's subjectivity. This involved discussions about their political affiliations, religious beliefs, basic histories, participation in protests, and the opinions of those close to them on these matters. The second part was a discussion of the images that they chose to contribute to the project. We discussed what the participant saw in each image, the narratives they associated with the image, and why they chose to submit that particular image. We also considered some of the images selected by other participants in the same manner. If, for whatever reason, I felt that we had not adequately achieved the goals of either of these sections, I simply met with them again and continued the conversation. Once these interviews were completed, I compared the participants' subjectivities to their affective experiences of these images and considered how these interacted.

### A) Context of Interviews

This thesis focuses on the subjectivities of individuals, which were influenced by Egyptian culture, religious beliefs, their personal experiences, brain chemistry, etc. It is not a goal of this research to equate the participants' considerations of images with assumptions and value systems generally associated with 80 million Egyptians. This would be a gross oversimplification that would contribute little to the task at hand. Instead, this research seeks to explore the participants' individual assumptions and value systems in depth in order to understand their considerations of images. As this thesis will likely be read by those who are unaware of what life is like in Egypt. Thus, I have described here some aspects of Egyptian culture relevant to this research that will benefit

the readers' understanding in the following chapters.

Religious life in Egypt is usually considered in terms of Islam and Orthodox Christianity. The view generally held by Egyptians, including the participants in this project, is that the 90% of the population is Sunni Muslim while 10% is Coptic Christian. Mosques can be found on nearly every corner throughout the country. Coptic monasteries are less plentiful, and often the target of violence. Amin (2000:38) suggests that the religious fanaticism in some parts of Egypt was born out of the frustrations of the Egyptian middle class, which has, over time, become less and less able to achieve its material ambitions. This, along with a "natural tendency toward the stricter observance of religious teachings" means that violence with religious motivations is not unheard of. Despite the co-existence of Muslims and "Copts" in Egypt for centuries, marriage across religious lines is generally frowned upon. Doing so is often considered turning one's back one one's faith by both groups (Thomson Reuters Foundation 2013).

"Westernization" was once a means by which social classes were defined in Egypt. Nasr's revolution in the 1950's liberated Egypt from western economic and political control, but the Western conception of "progress" remained a part of Egyptian social and cultural life (Amin 2000:45). Additionally, "western-ness" became, and continues to be, associated with the privileged classes. The Egyptian use of language is a perfect example of this. Speaking Arabic well is not generally considered desirable. Having to depend upon English or another foreign language so much that one struggles to speak conventional Arabic is a sign of being immersed in the Western milieu. Egyptian officials or journalists in an interview might purposely use an English word and then behave as if they must struggle to find the Arabic equivalent (Amin 2000:87). *Gallabaya* (robes worn by Egyptian farmers), traditional music, and a dependence on Arabic are all associated with simplicity, ignorance, and "the country." People in large cities, especially Cairo, might think of farmers as simple and easily-persuaded, making these peasants more likely to be *baltagiyya* (hired thugs) bused in from the country by manipulative organizations in order to cause trouble at demonstrations.

The situation of women in Egypt has changed drastically in the fifty years since Egypt earned its independence from Britain in the 23 July Revolution. Traditionally, women were once dependent on their husbands' economic provision. Since then, it has

become permissible for women to work, vote and get a complete education (Amin 2000:81). However, when compared to other nations in the Middle East and North Africa, the situation of women in Egypt is not positive. In a 2013 poll of Middle Eastern scholars concerning the rights and treatment of women in 22 Arab countries, Egypt was placed last. It was given this position largely due to widespread sexual harassment and genital mutilation (Thomson Reuters Foundation 2013).

The historical context within which these interviews took place is also important to include. The ongoing state of affairs during this fieldwork period is important to consider; the participants' descriptions of their beliefs and affiliations were often obviously addressing current issues in Egypt. For instance, the closer the interviews were to the 30th of June, 2013, the more the participants discussed whether or not they believed this protest would benefit Egypt and if they planned to participate in the pro or anti-Morsi protests on this date.

This fieldwork took place between the spring and early summer of 2013. My goal was to interview fifteen participants before the *Tamarod* (rebel) protests on the 30th of June. I wished to interview all of the participants in a somewhat similar context, and the political and social landscape of Egypt is constantly changing. Thus, I wanted these interviews to be as close together as possible. Additionally, I did not want to interview participants after the substantial changes that were likely to take place on the 30th, for the same reason. The end result of my efforts was interviews with fourteen participants between the 1st of April and the 28th of June.

At the beginning of the year, conflicts between supporters and opponents of President Morsi had already begun with protests from both sides that occasionally became violent with each other. These were situated around the Presidential Palace in Heliopolis and Tahrir Square. Tourism and other forms of revenue for the country were very low and fuel and food shortages were gaining attention. Morsi had been in office for 9 months, and whether the majority of Egyptians were for or against him was a matter of debate ("What Does…" 2013).The emigration of Copts out of Egypt was growing, and most cited frustrations and fears that the government was no longer protecting them from religiously motivated violence as their reason for fleeing (Glain 2013)

On the 22nd of May, the rescue of seven kidnapped security officers was hailed by

some as proof of Morsi's political prowess (Kirkpatrick 2013). At the same time, Ethiopia announced plans to build a dam on the Blue Nile, one of the sources for the Nile River that flows through Egypt. Many were concerned that Egypt's water supply would be affected. Opponents of Morsi expressed frustration that his meetings with Ethiopian officials did not prevent the approval of the project, while supporters emphasized that this dam would not actually affect the water supply (Helmy 2013).

Meanwhile, the *Tamarod* (Rebel) campaign was launched on the 1st of May. It involved a petition announcing that the signers "withdrew trust from the Brotherhood's regime" and called for early presidential elections. Their goal was to reach 15 million signatures by the 30th of June, the one-year anniversary of Morsi's election. By the end of May, the group claimed to have gathered 3 million signatures. The Muslim Brotherhood and their supporters were skeptical about these claims and pointed out that such a petition had no legal foundation (Lindsey 2013). Nevertheless, by the 10th of June the campaign claimed to have almost reached its goals ("Tamarod approaches…" 2013). As the 30th approached, a counter-campaign named "*Tagarud*" (Impartiality) was arranged in support of Morsi and claimed on the 21st that it had gathered 13 million signatures ("Egypt's Islamists…" 2013). They called for rallies on the 28th to support the president, referring to the opponents of Morsi as *felool*, or remnants of the former regime (Seleh 2013).

### B) Sample and Sampling Technique

An important element of this thesis is the exploration of the constantly changing and transforming points from which individual Egyptians view the world. In order to attain a certain "richness" in this exploration of subjectivity, I sought to interview people from a variety of different backgrounds and ways of life rather than limiting the project to a particular group. To achieve this diversity, I selected participants from amongst certain descriptive categories: age, publicly declared political affiliation, religious affiliation, gender, participation in protests, and social class (which was determined by education and employment, or the employment of their parents). The purpose of these categories was not to create problematic categories of subjectivity, but rather simply to ensure that there was significant contrast between the perspectives contributing to this project. The large variety of people that I met with helped to make the relationship between the

participants' subjectivities and affective experiences clear. However, these people should not be considered as a sample representative of Egypt or any group besides themselves. Willing participants were found via "snowballing." I knew of several interested Egyptians who then connected me to others who were willing to assist me in my project. I often asked them to help me find people of particular political affiliations or beliefs, especially near the end of the fieldwork when it was clearer which demographics were lacking from my project.

This project was limited to considering the perspectives of Egyptians on their own Revolution. Thus, I must specify what made a person "Egyptian" enough to be included as a participant in this project. Certainly, official citizenship is not the only determination of "Egyptian-ness." For the purposes of this project, I needed to interview people who lived, thought, and felt as an Egyptian. All the participants in this thesis identified themselves as Egyptians and had spent a large enough amount of their lives inside the country that they were steeped in Egyptian culture and ways of thinking and feeling.

Unfortunately, during this fieldwork I was not fluent enough in *a'mmayya* (Egyptian Arabic) to discuss the participants' affective experiences in Arabic with them. For this reason, I considered only participants that could speak English well enough to communicate with me about the topics this thesis considers. This limited my selection of participants to those middle and upper class Egyptians who could afford language education. The "Limitations" section of this chapter considers how this affected my discussions with the participants.

The fourteen Egyptians that I interviewed met my project's need for a diverse allotment of subjectivities. I sought out participants from among several descriptive categories. Since their subjectivities are one of the primary considerations of this project, I here provide a brief introduction to these qualities of subjectivity. Throughout this thesis, when discussing a participant's behavior or providing a quote, I remind the reader who I am speaking about and provide any information about them that is pertinent to the discussion.

The participants in this project included five women and nine men. Five of them, three men and two women, lived with their parents at the time. Eight participants have children and two of those have children who had grown and moved out of their house.

This leaves one participant who lives away from his parents, but does not have any children. These living situations are a good representation of the general gender distribution of participants. To determine social class, I considered class markers such as employment, education, and the employment and education of their parents. By these means, I found six of the participants to be lower upper class, five to be upper middle class, and three to be lower middle class.

The participants' political sensibilities are considerably more difficult to describe and decidedly more complex than for or against the Revolution. Many described having changed their political opinions multiple times in the past, especially concerning Morsi's presidency. Four explained that they supported Mubarak during the 18 Days of Protest, but only two of those four still felt this way at the time of the interviews. Seven of the participants reveled in the sense of unity against Mubarak within Tahrir Square during this period. The remaining three opposed Mubarak, but never visited the protest or felt much unity with the protesters. Most participants had changed their opinion of the military and SCAF many times throughout the Revolution, and several remained undecided or indifferent about their leadership potential. Two claimed that the military was the only entity left in Egypt that was powerful enough to lead the country, but two more adamantly defended the military's innocence. Concerning then-President Morsi, most participants' opinion of him had changed drastically over time. Some opinions had transformed from seeing Morsi as the true legacy of the Revolution to seeing him as morally reprehensible and politically foolish, and vice versa. At the time of the interviews, three participants defended Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood. The remaining eleven varied from adamant opposition of Morsi to general distaste without any intention of taking action.

All but four of the participants took part in demonstrations at some point during the Revolution. Nine attended the protests within Tahrir Square during the 18 Days of Protest, though not all of these supported the removal of Mubarak. One of these also attended pro-Mubarak demonstrations. Four attended protests against SCAF during their

period leading the country and two participated in protests supporting SCAF. Four took part in protests against Morsi and one attended a protest supporting Morsi.[1]

The participants in this project included a wide range of religious sensibilities. These are based on how the participants described themselves. Their reports may not necessarily be accurate, but how they self-identify provides information about their loyalties, who they spend much of their time with, and the expectations that they have of themselves and others. An oversimplified report of religious beliefs would simply separate these participants into eleven Muslims and three Coptic Christians; there is certainly more nuance to this category. The participants' religious beliefs vary from agnostic to devout and liberal to conservative. Some practice religious traditions consistently while others define themselves as Muslim or Christian only because that is their family's sensibility. Some speak often about religious ideals while considering the behavior of different parties, while others do not speak explicitly about religious ideas throughout their interviews. The participants' beliefs about the inclusion of religious ideas in government and the Revolution vary just as widely.

Another important sample gathered during this project was a collection of images. Many considerations of imagery and affect focus on one "type" of image; for instance Susan Sontag (Sontag 2003:11) considers images of war and violence, while Harper and Faccioli (2000:23) consider particular Italian advertisements. This project includes a wide variety of images. All these images were submitted by the participants, and their only instructions for selecting them were to bring those images related to the Egyptian Revolution that they found most meaningful. The result was fourteen perspectives of the most meaningful aspects of one period of political change. The participants presented images depicting acts of violence, evidence of violence, evidence of conspiracies, periods of celebration, acts religious and political unity, acts of courage, and. faces of influential people. In total, they submitted one hundred and twenty-two images, each of which we considered during our interviews.

In the course of this thesis, I support my analysis by discussing the participants' considerations of the images that best exemplify the themes under analysis. Thus, I refer

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[1] This is not taking into account their participation in the 30th of June protests against Morsi, as this thesis considers the Revolution up until the 29th of June.

to thirty-six of the one hundred and twenty-two images submitted. When I refer to one of these images, I employ a customized description with the information pertinent to that particular discussion, as well as a citation involving one letter and one number in parenthesis. Each participant was assigned one letter, with the first letter of the alphabet referring to the participant who joined the project first and so on. The number indicates which of the images submitted by that participant is being discussed. In order to familiarize the reader with these thirty-six images, I have provided a guide in Appendix A. This guide presents the title used to refer to the image in the text, the submitter of the image, the code used to cite it, and a short description of its contents.

### C) Photo Elicitation

By considering the unique individual images that each person sees, we can come to understand the nature of the social and cultural world they inhabit. This is the thought process behind "photo elicitation," an interviewing method that played an important part in my methodology. I will here describe briefly the literature supporting this method before continuing on to explain my implementation of it in detail.

When first introduced, photo elicitation was presented as a method that simply involved including photographs in a research interview. Pink (2001:82) critiques photo elicitation in *Doing Visual Ethnography*, specifically the implications of using this name. The word "elicitation" implies drawing out, or the evoking of a confession, which suggests the visual methods that were first suggested by Collier and Collier in the 1950's and 60's. These considered photographs to be simply visual representations of reality and assumed that "the facts are in the pictures." Collier and Collier (1986:100) presented this approach in *Visual Anthropology* and provided the example of his study of the migration of Acadian farmers to Bristol caused by technological and economic change. He found that bringing pictures of industrial and commercial Bristol into interviews elicited more explanation of the farmers' new lifestyle than verbal interviews.

More recently however, Harper (2002:13) presents how photo elicitation has been redefined as a method of collaborating with participants. In Harper's model, images are interpreted differently by people with different understandings of reality. The method of photo elicitation then involves engaging participants in interpreting the photograph's

visualization of reality. "This procedure is fueled by the radical but simple idea that two people standing side by side, looking at identical objects, see different things" (Harper 2002:22).

Photo elicitation is part of a relatively new way to produce knowledge in research. Social scientists have, for many years, considered the people they were studying as "subjects" who they had the power to represent as they thought best. *Participatory* knowledge production is based on the authority of the participant rather than only the researcher. It considers the participant to be, by definition, uniquely qualified to contribute to the research and represent themselves (Guerrero and Tinkler 2010:59). Ginsburg advocated for this participatory approach and reported that many Visual Anthropologists had been creating highly collaborative film projects since the mid-1970's that "subverted the purely observational style that had initially characterized the field" (1995:67). The value of participatory knowledge production lies in a collaboration with participants who have a voice in representing themselves.

Photo elicitation is a particularly useful method for participatory research, as it addresses one of the primary difficulties with authoritative participants: perspective. Participants are, by definition, very close to the subject at hand, and thus would neglect to explain the things that they took for granted that could be vital to the research. Photo elicitation makes the participant into a viewer of the aspect of their lives that concerns the research. This encourages them to describe cultural assumptions and value systems that they would have otherwise neglected to discuss. The end result is an informed account of an aspect of their own life that is unique to that participant.

For example, Snyder and Ammons (1993:111) took pictures of baseball players doing their normal round of warm-up activities, and then examined the photos with participants to discuss their interpretations of the events depicted. They found that each player had a training routine filled with rituals, visualizations, and methods of emotional control that were unique. Each player tuned this routine to most effectively help them attain "optimal arousal" and play well.

The form of the visual representation does not matter; its relationship with the viewer is the essential defining factor of photo elicitation. The images can be authored by the subjects, researcher, or someone else prior to the study (Harper 2002:19). For

example, Harper and Faccioli (2000:23) undertook a study of interpretations of advertisements aimed specifically at Italians. They interviewed people from various groups with pictures of these advertisements to discuss their perspectives of them. They then categorized the different responses as "accepted, contested or rejected."[2]

Radley and Taylor's (2003:77) study of patients' experience of a hospital ward involved giving each of them a camera to take their own pictures of the space. Later on, Radley and Taylor met with the patients to discuss why they chose to photograph the way that they did. He found that bringing together these narratives with the pictures lead to ideas that the patients would not or could not talk about openly. This brings us to another benefit of photo elicitation as presented by Harper; interviews with images produce knowledge unavailable in interviews depending only on verbal communication because the brain processes visual and spoken information differently. Photo elicitation does not simply produce more information "But rather … evokes a different kind of information" (Harper 2002:13).

## D) Interview Plan

Once a prospective participant expressed a willingness to assist me with my project, I explained the topic and goals of my thesis and that I would need to meet with them at least twice, for at least an hour and half each time. If they were still interested in participating, I arranged to meet them. I always insisted that they chose the location of our meetings and that it be a space where they felt comfortable expressing themselves and speaking about often-controversial political topics. Additionally, experiencing the spaces where the participants worked, learned, relaxed, or lived gave me useful information for understanding their subjectivities. All interviews were conducted in English.

I met with the participants at locations of their choice for thirty-three total interviews. Of these, nine were at their place of education, eight were at their place of work, seven were in their home, four were in a café, and five were in their car. At the start of the first interview, I again described the nature of my thesis and what their

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[2] This is similar to the "connecting" and "deflecting" forms of interaction which this thesis considers. However, my project has a different goal: to understand why viewers felt or rejected feeling about images. Thus, I chose to utilize a different, two-fold categorization scheme.

participation would entail. I introduced my small recording device to each participant and then set it between us for the duration of the interview. Additionally, this device often doubled as the means to view images. I also took simple notes on the participants' behavior in a notebook while we talked. I made sure that the Internet was available wherever we met, and I pointed out to each participant that it was permissible to access this should they desire to look up information or show me an image.

I separated my time with each participant into two sections. The goal of the **first section** was to come to an understanding concerning each participant's individual subjectivity. I began the conversation by introducing myself. I described my employment, my education, the places I had lived, and where I grew up. This prompted the participants to do the same and introduce themselves in a likewise manner. Usually, from this point on I did not need to lead the conversation, but rather direct it towards information pertinent to this thesis. The Participants were usually enthusiastic about their opinions and addressed many of my questions before I asked them. I made note of the topics that they prioritized in the discussion while ensuring that we covered all the items important for my project.

During our conversations, I inquired about what they would consider to be important events from the Revolution, and asked specifically about the 18 days of Protest, Maspero Demonstrations, Mohammed Mahmoud Battle, Port Said Incident, and recent Morsi protests. I asked them for their opinions about what happened at these events and if they felt/feel solidarity with a particular group. Would they call themselves a Revolutionary? A "Son of Mubarak?" A Liberal? A Muslim Brother? Do their family and friends share this feeling? Did they have any family or friends who they did not feel were supporting the same cause? I asked them if they witnessed or participated in any Revolutionary protests, and, if they did, what happened there.

During this first section, I requested that, at our next meeting, the participant show me approximately five to ten images that they associated with the Revolution. I emphasized that these should be the images that were the most powerful or meaningful to them personally. The images could be any that they considered pertinent to Revolutionary issues, and video would be accommodated as well as pictures.

The **second section** involved a conversation during which the participant and I

examined the images that they contributed. We viewed these images on a variety of devices. Desktop computers were sometimes used when we arranged to meet in a computer lab or at the participant's home. Some of the participants brought their laptop or mobile phone to the interview with the images saved to the device. On one occasion, a participant emailed me the images beforehand and I brought them to the interview.

The participants and I discussed the images that they were submitting to the project at length. Exactly half, or seven, of the participants neglected to make a selection of images to submit before meeting with me. When this happened, I would sit with them as they searched the Internet or their computer for images that they wanted to submit. All but two of the participants selected between five and ten images (Amina submitted three and Haisam submitted nineteen).

My first question about each image was "What do you see?" This open-ended question sometimes provided insight into how the participants interpreted the image. I asked them to explain what made the actual image powerful or meaningful to them. Did the expressions on the depicted persons' faces elicit particular ideas in the mind of the participant? What people, places, or things did these faces remind them of? When and where did they first see them? If they had not already begun to do so, I then asked them to describe the narratives they associated with the image. If it was a photo of a deceased person, did what happened to them make them a martyr? How did the events depicted in the picture come about? Where did the various people in the picture and in the narrative stand, politically and otherwise?

I then presented other narratives about the image in order to encourage the participants to further explore their experiences of the image. I gathered a significant amount of information about notable Revolutionary images and events for this purpose. We discussed how they agreed or disagreed with these narratives and why. These narratives were part of a battle for social capital that took (and continues to take) place between various groups intending to use them for their own purposes, and for this reason there are often multiple contradictory narratives associated with each image (Gribbon 2012:18). It was certainly not the goal of this thesis to enter into debates with the participants about which account of these events was more accurate. However, I did mention viewpoints that opposed theirs in order to hear their opinion of them. The

different narratives that each participant believed or dismissed helped define what was important to them and what sources they found most believable.

Having finished viewing the participant's images, I presented them with images contributed by other participants. We viewed these on my recording device or a computer. I showed the first participant, Amina, images that I selected via my preliminary research with Egyptians involved in the Revolution. The second participant, Mohamed, was shown Amina's images. Cala, Dalia, Eyad and Gamal were shown Amina and Mohamed's images. After this point, a clear pattern of deflecting images that did not match their subjectivities had begun to emerge. In order to gain more insight into this pattern, I created a file of images from previous participants and brought this with me to each interview. I chose images from this file to show the participants. I determined my selection by considering what they were most likely to deflect, based on my knowledge of their subjectivity.

The participants and I viewed the images I presented and discussed them in a manner similar to the way in which we considered the images the participants submitted. I asked them "What do you see?" and this discussion invariably turned to their opinions of narratives they associated with the image. The Participants often were not familiar with the source of an image or the events depicted in it. In these situations, I allowed them to explain their assumptions before informing them, so that I might gain insight into their immediate affective experience of it as well as how they interacted with images that they did not have narratives for.

During my analysis, I referred to my detailed notes and transcriptions of these interviews. I grounded this analysis in the conceptual framework, cultural insights, and research questions described in this introduction. I created a large table that compared the participants' subjectivities and affective experiences. This gave me an understanding of the variety of different perspectives represented, as well as quick access to information about their experiences and beliefs. I also summarized the participants' considerations of images and organized these based on strong themes. This provided a better understanding of how they behaved differently when connecting and deflecting.

The opinions that the participants shared with me about political and social change in Egypt could put them at odds with future movements in this country.

Throughout this thesis, I take precautions to protect the identities of the participants by selecting pseudonyms for them from amongst popular Egyptian names.

I use many quotes from my interviews with the participants in the following chapters. I have italicized all of these quotes to prevent confusion. Any Arabic expressions that they used have been included and a translation is given directly after the word in parentheses. The most commonly used Arabic word in these quotes was "*y3nni,*" which I have translated as "like." This is a word in Egyptian Arabic used to communicate hesitation or simply fill the space in the speaker's sentence while they, *like*, think. Additionally, although the participants all spoke English well enough to communicate how they felt, this was not always apparent when their words were transcribed. For this reason, some of the quotes I use may not exemplify perfect grammar or syntax. In order to further establish the authority of the participants in this project, whenever I use information that they provided, particularly quotes, I provide a citation. These citations contain three numbers, designating, respectively, the interview, recording number, and minute during which the participant provided the information I am using.

This methodology makes use of conventions and processes from the Anthropological way of thinking. Anthropology seeks to compare and explore cultures in order to understand fundamental aspects of humanity alone and in relation to each other. Modern Anthropology is informed by a wide variety of methodologies, but the most emblematic is ethnography, where the researcher immerses themselves in a particular group or culture and considers some aspect of the behavior and worldview of these people as well as its effect on the researcher. Though I did live in Egypt throughout the fieldwork for this project and for two years prior, I did not utilize an ethnographic framework for my research, as should be clear from the description of my methods in this methodology. However, this participatory research project is still based on a foundation of Anthropological convention. Rather than examining participants as individual subjects defined only by their chemistry and stage of development, as a more psychological approach would, this project considers the participants as complex conglomerations of society, chemistry, experiences, history, and affect (Kleinman and Fitz-Henry 2007:52).

## 4. Limitations

One of the primary limitations of this project actually lies in the nature of the subjectivities that I explored. Political and social opinions are in a constant state of flux as new events take place, especially during a revolution. Thus, this project aimed at a moving target, and after the interviews were complete, the participants' subjectivities continued to transform. However, this thesis captured historical details that can help us understand past events as they unfolded. Additionally, I consider universal ideas about the subjective nature of affective experiences that could be valuable to the understanding of the human experience.

This thesis may also seem to be limited by its reliance on retrospective reports of affective experience; that is to say, one might believe that during interviews, I was exploring affective experiences that had long since been transformed by more recent events and experiences. Fortunately, this is not the case. My goal was to explore the affective experiences that were taking place during our conversation about images (which usually depicted past events). While I placed emphasis on the participants' memories of past experiences, this was necessary to come to a better understanding of what was occurring during the conversation. Whether or not the participants' memories of their past feelings and experiences were accurate, these memories had a significant impact on their present affective experience.

Language was another significant limitation on my research. Despite my best efforts, I was not fluent in *a'mmayya* (Egyptian Arabic) at the time of this fieldwork. Since my topic concerned complex ideas and experiences, it was necessary that I only consider participants fluent enough in English to communicate these ideas to me. This meant that my participants were mostly upper or middle class, as the poor in Egypt are much less likely to have access to that level of education.

Having these conversations in English with people for whom English was not their first language was of course a limiting factor. As discussed in the literature review section, feelings are understood to be, in some sense, determined differently in each culture (Lutz 1986:417). We discussed affective experiences, and these Egyptians were translating their culturally distinct feelings out of their native language and into English, which might not have had adequate vocabulary to correctly describe Egyptian feelings.

Indeed, several of the participants struggled to describe events or experiences in English. In these situations, the participants and I used several different methods to breach the language barrier. I patiently discussed what they wished to communicate until they felt satisfied that I understood what they meant, even if it required a large number of English words to communicate this meaning. This took place in reverse as well; oftentimes they patiently explained some aspect of Egyptian culture that I needed to grasp in order to understand their story. For instance, Dalia set aside several minutes to explain to me what the expression "*You are in my eye*" means in Egypt (2,1,64). Additionally, several of the participants made use of the Internet in order to find translations of their Arabic words. Finally, if all these methods failed, I asked them to simply say the Arabic words clearly so I could find a translation for them later on.

The language barrier also limited me in my survey of newspaper and Internet sources. Though many articles were published in English and Arabic, even more of the discourse about the Revolution took place entirely in Arabic.

## 5. Reflexive

I conversed with each of the participants about their personal information, thoughts, and feelings, not only about the Egyptian Revolution. This made my position as a researcher in relation to them extremely important to consider. I am white, middle-class male, born in the United States. I received my undergraduate degree in Philosophy/Religion and Sociology from a small school in Midwestern America. I never lived outside the United States prior to coming to Cairo to earn my master's degree in Anthropology. I moved to Egypt during the summer of 2011, only months after the initial 18 Days of Protest in January and February of that year, when Egypt was under of SCAF-control.

I should also consider my motivations for undertaking a thesis within this particular field. I have, since before my education began, considered the subjectivities of individual people to be the primary obstacle, and simultaneously the greatest asset, to honest and healthy relationships. I find it easy to relate to and understand the perspectives of others, and have found frustration in other people's inability, or unwillingness, to do the same. Additionally, the images of the Egyptian Revolution present an element of

mystery to me. They are connected to discourses and cultural assumptions that I am not privy to, having been raised elsewhere.

During this project, when asking them to confide these personal things to me, I, as a researcher, had little to offer them in return. This could have tipped the relationship of power in these conversations overwhelmingly in my direction. This is quite contrary to typical human relationships and could hinder our conversations. I attempted to remedy this in two ways: I was open about my background and experiences, and beliefs, and I asked questions about Egypt that fostered a kind of teacher-student relationship. Being open about who I am helped to give some of the power back to the participants; I knew things about them, and they knew things about me. Treating them as a teacher also helped empower them as someone well-informed. During the interviews, I presented myself as a friendly, open-minded person, enthusiastic to learn about the Revolution and Egyptian culture. I made my interest in the Egyptian Revolution and affective experiences known to each participant.

## 6. Structure of Thesis

Including this introduction, this thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter two discusses how the participants' subjectivities matched their affective experiences and their interpretation of images. Multiple participants viewed the same image and created different meanings for it. These interpretations were informed by narratives that the participants had heard from a variety of sources.

Chapter three examines the reasons behind connecting and deflecting and why connecting involves the participants' interpretation of the image matching their subjectivity. The participants' investment, or "stake," in the outcome of political and social change in Egypt was an important factor in their consideration of images.

Chapter four considers the participants' affective experiences in greater depth by examining how their bodies, faces, and voices were used differently when they connected and deflected images. Their approach to interpretation was also different when connecting or deflecting, suggesting that meaning is a necessary element of feeling. While the participants were able to determine the meaning of images to a certain extent, I

found that the narratives the participants had heard created an undeniable "voice" for the image.

Chapter five, the conclusion of this thesis, considers the ideas suggested throughout the former chapters and what they mean for the study of images, affective experience, subjectivity, and political and social movements.

# Chapter II- Subjectivities and Interpretation

This chapter considers the beliefs, experiences, memories, and loyalties that make up the participants' subjectivities and how these relate to their affective experience of an image. This exploration focuses on how the participants' subjectivities influenced their consideration of images through interpretation.

I begin by establishing the strong presence of this relationship in the participants' consideration of images. I introduce the important part played by interpretation, which is in tune with the conclusions of Mitchell (2005:8), Pink (2001:82) and Gaines (1999:90) about the subjective nature of images. I explore the various elements that the participants used during their interpretations to endue images with meaning. Their subjectivity was their foundation throughout their interpretation, and they used a variety of sources to inform this interaction with the image.

Following their initial interpretation of the image, the participants either "connected" or "deflected" the meaning they found. In my introduction, I described these two forms of interaction with images as a useful way to conceive of affective experience. The participants connected to images that they were able to interpret to match their subjectivity by accepting and exploring the meaning that they initially found. However, when their meaning for the image did not match their subjectivity, this process short-circuited and the participants avoided or attempted to discredit this meaning. This agrees with what Sontag (2003:11) states regarding people's consideration of the pain of others. She found that people are not universally empathetic towards violent images of human death. Viewers reject images that do not match their subjectivities by declaring them to be staged fabrications. The part played by subjectivity is essential to understanding their connection to or deflection of images. The best way to illustrate this is to enter into a consideration of the participants' subjectivities and their different interpretations of the same images.

# 1. Comparing Interpretations

In my introduction, I asked: "What is an image?" Mitchell (2005:8) points out that the author of an image, though they aim the camera, cannot determine the meaning of the image to viewers. I asked the participants to submit images that were "meaningful to them." The meaningfulness of an image is created by the subjective perspective of the viewer, says Pink (2001:82). Ginsburg (1995:64) agrees, stating that people of different socio-cultural backgrounds and experiences see different things in the same image. So it is clear that the meaning of an image is what the viewer interprets it to be. As Slovic (2004:311) suggests with risk analysis and Gaines (1999:90) with political mimesis, this interpretation is not drawn out cognition, but rather instantaneous feeling. Interpretation is an action undertaken by means of affect; viewers don't just "see" the image, they "feel" it and are thus able to almost instantly interpret where they stand in relation to it.

Interpretation is important for this chapter's consideration of subjectivity and affective experience. The participants were not passively viewing images and responding to them, they were interacting with the image and playing an important part in determining the meaning of the image. Interpretations of images are important not just for the image they refer to, but to the "world" they suggest. Gaines' article "Political Mimesis" (1999:90) considers its namesake and how documentary films meant to inspire action are affective when referring to issues pertinent to the audience. She considers how footage of Rodney King being beaten by police inspired so much political mimesis in its audience that rioting and looting resulted. She points out that it was not the image alone that inspired this; instead "The representation acquires the power of the represented." Rodney King's mistreatment was interpreted by the audience to suggest a world of police brutality and injustice, which they had past experiences with. *This* motivated them to action. Gaines therefore finds that it is the world that an image represents that truly inspires viewers to move. However, as Ginsburg (1995:64) and Pink (2001:82) have shown us, what an image represents is subjective; viewers interpret these images and give them meaning. Therefore, I can work with the premise that the participants' different interpretations of the same image suggested different worlds. They endued images with meanings that implied these worlds. I consider the interpretation of meaning and suggestion of worlds in the participants' discussions of several different images. I briefly

introduce each participant before I consider their interpretation of the image in order to focus on how their subjectivities lend themselves to particular interpretations.

Both Cala (C 3) and Gamal (G 5) submitted a digital image of what appears to be a scan of the front page of the newspaper "*Al Masry Yom.*" The page features by eleven photographs of smiling people. The largest one, situated in the center, is of a young woman named Sally Zahran, while the remaining ten are all of men, most of whom also appear to also be young. The headline reads: "Martyrs of the 25th of January Revolution," and "The Flower that opened in the gardens of Egypt." Presumably, these eleven people were among those killed in clashes with



(C 3) Front page of "*Al Masri Yum*" newspaper. February 2011

police on the 25th of January and the days that followed. Figures from the Egyptian Health Ministry suggested that around 850 people died during the 18 Days of Protest ("Court Acquits…" 2012). Those who died were proclaimed to be martyrs by many who supported the protests.

Cala is a graduate student who is Coptic, married with one young child, and attending a private university. Her involvement in protests was limited to a trip to Tahrir Square on the night Mubarak left office because she did not want to leave her child. She was enthusiastic about the Revolution until the Muslim Brotherhood came to power. She was very concerned that this group's religious nature could threaten the security of her family.

Cala presented this image to me and described it as: "*The martyrs who died on the 25th… [and] the 28th as well*" (2,1,12). She focused on the woman in the image; she did not recognize the others. She told me about the controversy that was started concerning whether or not this young woman wore a veil. Cala found this unimportant: "*She was*

*killed during the Revolution, this is what matters.*" These images of martyrs were used in a music video for a song by Hamada Helal that Cala found moving: "*Up until recently, whenever I hear it I cry. So [this image] reminds me of the song again.*" The Revolution was "*Getting out of something horrible, hopefully into a better thing. And these are the people who paid for it.*" Cala endued this image with meaning concerning sacrifice and hope for a better future; though she did not know much about the other people in the image, she recognizes them all as martyrs who "*paid for,*" what was hopefully a better future for Egypt. This interpretation suggests a world in which the people who died protesting during the 18 Days of Protest were martyrs whose sacrifice might have created a better future for Egypt.

Gamal is a middle-aged Muslim and an accountant with two young children. Due to resistance from his family and indecisiveness, he did not attend the 18 Days of Protest as first. However, he was eventually inspired to go by images of the deaths of protests in the "Camel Battle." He believed very strongly that the Revolution had won Egypt a golden opportunity, and it would be ruined if Morsi were forcibly removed.

Gamal also presented this image to me during our interview and initially focused on explaining which of the people he could remember and why (2,1,21). He recognized a man named Karim Banona because "*he is father for child*" and also Sally Zahran "*because many stories said about [her].*" Later on he spoke about the mourning father of another of the deceased whom he met in Tahrir Square and "*I still remember his father's face.*" He described seeing the pictures: "*You want to cry…because… I think… maybe he's my brother, my father, my sister, myself, my son, anything like this. Because… you can think how the other people feeling*" (2,2,1). He said that this sadness was alleviated somewhat when he saw people fighting in Tahrir Square for the cause the martyrs died for. Gamal's interpretation associates these faces with tragic narratives and depicts the deceased as dying for the benefit of Egypt. He sees their deaths as inspiring others to fight for the same cause and this ultimately made Egypt a better place. This suggests a world that includes heartbreaking sacrifices made in order to create the improved Egypt at the time of the interview.

Haisam is a middle-aged doctor, businessman, and Muslim who is married with three children. He participated in the protests on the 25th of January against police

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brutality He also attended pro-Mubarak protests during the 18 Days of Protest and actively supported Mubarak's legitimate presidency during the 18 Days of Protest and afterward. His father and several of his uncles were high-ranking members of the military, and he believed that this group was the best hope for Egypt's future. He distrusted the Muslim Brotherhood, but his family supported them.

When I presented this image to Haisam, he immediately said: "*This is the girl that…died in her home*" (2,4,30) He then pointed to one of the men and said: "*I think he's from the Muslim Brotherhood,*" a group he did not support. He stated that "*Not more than ten or eleven*" protesters actually died in Tahrir Square and the rest were killed while trying to attack the Ministry of Interior. He established earlier that the assault on this building was dangerous and destructive for Egypt and the protesters who did it put themselves in a position to be harmed by those who defended Egypt. Haisam's interpretation of this image suggests a world in which the majority of people who died during the 18 Days of Protest were doing sinister or mindlessly destructive things that put them in danger. His approach to those he did not see as devious, like Sally Zahran, seemed to avoid suggesting anything besides that her death was less dramatic than some narratives depicted it as being.

George is a Copt and a young academic who recently completed his education in Europe. He spent the 18 Days of Protest guarding his home alongside his neighbors, but his life was otherwise mostly unaffected by the Revolution. He expressed frustration with the economy, traffic, and litter in Egypt. The incompetent, dishonest, and traitorous nature of the Muslim Brotherhood were his primary concerns, and he participated in several anti-Morsi protests.

George's first words when I presented this image were "*Oh, God. These are the people who died during the eighteen days*" (2,2,70).  He went on to describe it as "*the martyrs of the 25*[th] *of January Revolution.*" He went on to say: "*It kinda bothered me that…it looks like they died for nothing. Unfortunately. I really hate saying this, but. And every time I see their pictures I get both angry and like really depressed or sad.*" Georges saw these people as martyrs, but their sacrifice might not have achieved its goal, which made this image depressing. This meaning suggests a world in which the martyrs died to

benefit Egypt, but, sometime later, it had become apparent that their deaths could be in vain.

Mary is a senior-aged librarian with three daughters, all of which live outside Egypt. She grew up in an upper-class family. She is very involved and invested in the Coptic Christian Church but emphasized that she spoke often with people of various classes and beliefs. Violence and the state of the poor vexed her greatly, and these were her reasons for opposing Mubarak, SCAF, and the Muslim Brotherhood, the latter of whom she was extremely distrustful.

When I presented this image to Mary, she first read the headline, then said: "Ya haram! *[Pity!] Heart breaking*" (2,2,14). She took the device from my hands and used it to zoom in on each of the faces in the picture. She explained that this picture was horrible because these "*nice people*" did not deserve to die. Religion has no bearing; "*It is all one people: human beings*." Her consideration focused on the tragedy of lost lives and how Egyptians should be united. She wondered how the parents of these deceased young people felt, and her eyes filled with tears as she described their pain as her pain. Suggests a world where loss of life during the Revolution was not a loss for one side, but rather all of Egypt and humanity.

The "Friday of Rage" was a "million man march" to Tahrir Square that took place on the 28th of January 2011 after the Muslim Friday prayers. It involved many marches starting from different locations throughout Cairo, snaking their way towards Tahrir Square (Mackey 2011). Clashes between these marches and police were some of the most violent of the 18 Days of Protest, with police



(C 2) Praying protesters sprayed during the "Bridge Battle:" *Al Masri Yum*
28 January 2011

being accused of using live ammunition and 20 people reportedly being killed ("Court acquits…" 2012). The *Qasr al Nil* "Bridge Battle" took place between protesters trying to cross the bridge to enter Tahrir Square and police attempting to prevent this. Many videos

and pictures were taken as the two sides pushed each other back and forth across the bridge several times before the police retreated. This particular image, which was submitted by Cala (C 2), Osama (O 3), and Tamer (Q 1), seems to have been taken from a video. The image is of a crowd of protesters filling one side of the bridge, while the other side is filled with the black uniforms and shiny helmets of the police. The protesters closest to the police are bowing in rows on the street. There is a man in a white robe leading them in prayer. A stream of water from an unseen source arches over the heads of the police and comes down on the bowed backs of those praying.

Haisam's initial consideration of this image was informational, discussing the popularity of the image and the basic information about the confrontation (C 2-2,4,28). He did, however, mention that protesters came from Giza, which he established earlier in the interview as a potential source for *baltagiyya* (thugs). When I asked about the people supposedly praying, Haisam said: "*It was a trick;*" the protesters pretended to be praying in order to stop the police's advance. He pointed out that this was not a prayer time, and that most of the protesters were not praying. He focused mostly on the actions of the protesters and depicted the police as passive. Additionally, he presented the police morally acceptable, since they would not hit praying protesters[3], though Haisam mentions that some media sources said they did. Haisam interprets this image to show how devious the protesters were, using prayer as a "*trick*" against the passive police. By insisting that this was not prayer time and most protesters were not praying, he undermined the potentially devout appearance of the people praying. With these meanings applied to the image, it suggests a world in which the protesters in this "Bridge Battle" were less heroic and more conniving, putting the police into situations where it was impossible not to make themselves look bad.

Osama is a middle-aged software engineer who was married with one child. He was a founding member of the "Revolutionary Socialists" and had been involved in organizing social movements for two decades. He was personally invested in the 18 Days of Protest. He emphasized the power and leadership potential of the now-politicized

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[3] It is considered reprehensible in Islam to interrupt someone while they are praying, and of course harming them is even more despicable.

Egyptian public. Despite not approving of SCAF or Morsi's leadership, he was positive about the changes in Egypt.

Osama characterized this image as "*an important battle*" and went on to explain why (O 2-2,1,20). He said that protesters did not even have rocks at first; they only pushed forward and were pushed backwards, though they did throw back tear gas grenades. Eventually the protesters organized a system of retrieving rocks and bringing them to the bridge to throw at police "*but for hours… they were only trying to push by their sheer bodies. And that was very strong.*" This lead to an animated description of how "*the balance of power has shifted tremendously it's like, we feel we're stronger, [the police] feel we are stronger.*" Osama, who had been very involved in protests long before the one in this picture, focused on the uniquely "clean" nature of this protest, as well as how the police could not stop it. He insisted that it was mostly non-violent; the protesters often used only their bodies rather than fighting, and they still won. This interpretation suggests a world in which the protesters were empowered by their organized efforts and belief in a common cause to defeat the once-powerful police while still remaining honorable by not resorting to much violence.

Tamer is a young Muslim engineering student attending a public university and living with his two brothers and parents. He specifically involved himself in protests that he had heard the police were attacking in order to protect the protesters. He saw Mubarak as corrupt, harmful to Egypt, and willing to do immoral things to keep his power. He felt the same way about SCAF. He was adamant that the anti-Morsi protesters were mostly *felool* (remnants of Mubarak's regime) and hurting Egypt.

Tamer introduced this image by saying: "*It's spraying water on the people who are praying*" (Q 1-2,1,8). He said that these people were praying *Asr* prayers on the bridge "*and the police attacked them.*" He interpreted the police as actively determining the situation whilst the passive protesters pray. He mentioned that at the moment this image was taken, he had been praying at *Rabaa* mosque before beginning a march to Tahrir Square, during which he was attacked by police. He also said that police had been using the fire hose seen in the picture to spray the *Imam* while held the prayers. He characterized this by saying: "*It's so bad.*" Tamer interpreted this image to show how dishonorably the police dealt with protesters on the bridge. The meaning he created for

this image suggested a world in which the police were willing to behave shamefully towards passive protesters in order to protect Mubarak's regime.

Both Haisam and Tamer made use of the EPA spectrum. They both interpret the other "side" as active (being the instigators of the event) and morally bad (willing to use prayer as a trick, or willing to attack praying people). Osama, on the other hand, considers the protesters to be powerful and active and portrays that as an extremely positive thing, while placing no emphasis on the actions of the police. Defining the nature of the different characters in the image was an essential part of the participants' interpretation of most images. As these examples have shown, these definitions were not used simply to define the "other side" as powerful, immoral instigators; participants defined various groups in a wide variety of unique ways.

Amina, the first participant to submit images, presented a professionally taken photograph of the Nile River with a bridge traversing it (A 2). It is clearly night-time, and many lights can be seen in the windows of various buildings. It is a time-lapse photo, so the headlights of the cars create


(A 2) Cairo by night: Unknown

long ribbons of yellow light twisting into the distance. A boat can be seen in the river, presumably unmoving. While I am unaware of the specific origins of this image, it is often used in tourism websites and was most likely taken several years before the 2011 Revolution (Destination Egypt; Flying Carpet Tours; Red Rose Tours).

Amina is a young, Muslim graduate student attending a private university who lives with her parents in a suburb of Cairo. She did not participate in any protests, though members of her family did, to her chagrin. She disapproved of the calamity of these protests and saw them as harmful to Egypt. She spoke nostalgically of Mubarak and the normal, peaceful life she lived before the Revolution. She saw the Muslim Brotherhood's incompetence as ultimate proof of the Revolution's failure.

Amina's description of this image harkens to days when things were better in Egypt. She said: "*I love this open landscape of Cairo.*" Cairo's streets had not been like this since she was twelve. She would go with only her mother out into the city, walk the streets, and not return home until 3 AM, all without fear. She said: "*I don't know… I just miss old Egypt. It doesn't mean that before it was okay. But at least… there was some kind of sanity or structure.*" Amina typified her selection as a search for images of peace and she interpreted this picture in this fashion. She referred to her past positive personal experiences as a child to give this image meaning. Her interpretation used this image to suggest a world in which Egypt could be a much more prosperous and peaceful place when people were not destructively protesting.

Dalia is a young undergraduate student at a private university and a Muslim that lives with her parents. She spent her life in a variety of countries due to her father's job. The primary reason for her involvement in the 18 Days of Protest was ideological. She went with her family on several trips to Tahrir Square and emphasized the connection she felt with her fellow protesters. She was confident that, as a result of this unity, Egyptians were making their country into a better place.

Dalia's immediate characterization of this image was: "*This is beautiful. This is absolutely beautiful*" (2,2,30). She suggested: "*That's what Egypt really looks like you know.*" She interpreted this image to be a testament to the present-day beauty of Egypt that not everyone can see. Dalia had insisted earlier in the interview that, despite appearances, Egypt had definitely been improved by the Revolution. This perspective was clearly informing her interpretation of this image. She combined her beliefs about the Revolution and her perception that the image was "*beautiful*" to create this interpretation. This suggests a world in which post-Revolutionary Egypt was figuratively as beautiful as this image depicts Cairo to be.

Mohamed is a young engineering undergraduate student at a private university who lives with his family in a suburb of Cairo. He was involved in protests against Mubarak, SCAF and Morsi, during which he witnessed violence and saw people killed. His descriptions of these events focused on the immoral acts of the police and their leaders. He was motivated by political concepts and ideals of fairness. He considered those controlling Egypt to be corrupted by their overabundance of power.

Mohamed started by saying: "*I just don't understand. I don't see… why they're special*" (2,2,8). He identified it as a photo of the October Bridge at night that "*They have in all the tourist websites.*"  He said the picture "*looks great*" but up close you can see the "*bits and details*" and it does not look so "*perfect.*" The traffic is bad and the pavement is not in good shape. He went on to suggest the person who submitted this picture is "*very patriotic,*" "*very nostalgic*," and "*one of* those *people.*" Mohamed expressed difficulty finding a meaning for this image. As he searched for meaning, he considered the person who submitted the image. He explained what world he believed the submitter was suggesting and then rejected it. He interpreted the image to be misleading, suggesting that Cairo was cleaner and better maintained than it actually was. This suggests a "gritty" world in which some people attempt hide the grit and pretend that nothing is wrong.

Eyad is a middle-aged artist who identifies himself as a Sufi Muslim. He spent most of his life in downtown Cairo and his family lived near there as well. The 18 Days of Protest were traumatic to him, as most aspects of his life were interrupted by it and he feared being deported by police due to his citizenship issues. However, he was drawn to the security, unity, and acceptance in Tahrir Square. He did not feel a connection to anti-SCAF or Morsi protests.

The first thing Eyad did upon viewing this image was to locate his apartment in it (2,3,10). He then characterized it by saying: "*This is a picture of Cairo.*" After some consideration of the objects in the image, he concluded: "*This image of Cairo before… cause there's a lot of lights around.*" He pointed out the number of lights in the hotel and then whispered: "*You can't see that now.*" He avoided giving any more opinions about the image until I pressed him about it. He said it reminded him of the security that had been lost since the Revolution. Eyad found a personal connection to the image by finding his house, and at first avoided discussing the meaning of the image. His joke suggested that he had created meaning, but found it less than pleasant, which is perhaps why he did not state it explicitly until I asked. This meaning suggests a world in which the Revolution had good intentions, but the end results may have cost security and made things harder for people like Eyad.

One participant's consideration of images did not overlap with the images in this section. Iman's introduction is presented here alongside her consideration of an image no

other participant viewed so that her subjectivity can be seen alongside her interpretation. After Mubarak was removed from the presidency, Egypt was lead by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) until civilian elections could be held. There were several demonstrations concerning SCAF's

(I 2) Police Officer with a Gun: Youtube November 2011

decisions during this period. The fashion in which the security forces dispersed these protests was a matter of some debate. Iman presented an image from this period of a police officer holding a gun (I 2). He is standing in a street with several other police officers. The picture is taken from a video, which Iman described as depicting the officer firing his gun down the street, presumably at protesters. He then turns and is congratulated by one of his men for successfully shooting a protester in the eyes ("Egyptian 'Eye-Sniper…'" 2013; "The Police Officer…" 2011).

Iman is a middle-aged chemist who is Muslim and has three college-age children. She spent the 18 Days of Protest in an apartment with her family, but left once to attend a pro-Mubarak protest. Incidents of violence, especially against young people, were very moving to her. Her support of SCAF diminished after many young people died in the Port Said Incident. She was very involved in protests against Morsi and the *Tamarod* (Rebel) campaign.

Iman's immediate response upon finding this image was to shout: "Ayawa! *[Yes!] This guy. This man. I hated [him]*" (2,1,6). She explained that this officer had happily shot protesters in the eyes, which was crueler than killing them, and compared the behavior of him and his men to bird hunters happy about a successful kill. She reported that he had been taken to court, but never convicted for these actions. She reported that, because of this video, people had figured out the officer's name, address, and phone number in order to threaten him in various ways. When I asked what she thought of this behavior, she said: "*They are right. They have the right*." Iman focused on the immoral crimes of this officer and the vengeful response to them. This interpretation suggests a

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world in which citizens must take it upon themselves to seek justice when leaders commit immoral actions.

In January of 2013, protesters set up demonstrations in front of the Presidential Palace in Heliopolis to protest against the then president Mohammad Morsi. On the night of the 1st of February, *Al-Hayat* satellite channel aired video caught by a hidden camera near the Presidential Palace. In



(B 3) Hamada Saber and police: *Al-Hayat* Satellite Channel
1 February 2013

it, a man was stripped of his clothing by a group of men dressed in police uniforms and then thrown into a police van (Knell 2013). The footage was aired multiple times by various TV channels and went viral on social media ("Interior Ministry…" 2013). Several pictures were taken from this footage, including the one that Mohamed submitted to me (B 3). Mohamed considered several stills from the video and chose one to submit. The image depicts a group of five figures in black standing and looking down at a naked man in the street. The man is sitting on the ground with his knees up, looking up at one of the figures.

Mohamed's selection of images focused mostly on images that "*bothered*" him and motivated him to oppose those in power. When he showed me this image, he announced: "*This is the one that bothered me the most*" (2,1,14). He described the events depicted: "*He's begging the guy to let him go, and right after the guy like slaps him in the face.*" He explained that this happened during a protest against Morsi and "*This guy was protesting. That's what I think.*" When I asked why this particular person had been assaulted by police, he said: "*I have no idea. Why the blue bra girl? Cause there was a bunch of people, then a bunch of other people.*" Mohamed also said that he lived within walking distance of this event. After seeing it on television, he ran to join the demonstration. Mohamed interpreted the image as depicting a brutal beating of a protester by police, suggesting a world in which police were willing to commit such acts of violence. The police were active, unfair, and powerful, while the protester was more passive; this was done *to* Saber. Haisam used similar definitions, but reversed, when he

defined the protesters as actively defining the clashes with police in the "Bridge Battle" image above.

Nader is a middle-aged computer technician and Muslim who is married with three children. He was outside Cairo during the 18 Days of Protest and supported the protesters because he wanted Egypt to change by peaceful means. His involvement in demonstrations was minimal, but he cared a great deal about politics. He emphasized the election of Morsi as the only way to bring about positive change, and that this change needed time to bear fruit.

When I presented this image to Nader, he appeared to become immediately less comfortable (2,2,25). He recognized Saber and explained that there were videos of him using guns, starting fires with molotov cocktails, and participating in pro-Mubarak protests. He said police were attempting to arrest him for these crimes when he took off his clothing in an attempt to avoid being caught. Nader emphasized: "*Hamada is not a protest[er]… Hamada is a kind of man that take money to do something.*" He also said: "*Someone from Mubarak party arranged this accident … to tell people that police is very bad like Mubarak period.*" In this image, Nader saw a *baltagy* (thug) attempting to avoid arrest for working with the former regime to undermine the new system. By describing Saber as active, powerful, and morally reprehensible, Nader's interpretation suggested a world in which such forces worked behind the scenes to hurt Egypt and discredit its new leadership.

Karim is a middle-aged financial manager at a tourism agency who is Muslim and had two children. Several of his family members are officers in the Egyptian military. He supported Mubarak and never participated in the 18 Days of Protest, but thought highly of the peaceful methods used during this demonstration. Security and changing things the "right way" were important to him. He trusted the military and saw Morsi as weak and willing to do immoral things to keep power.

I presented this image to Karim. He began: "*This one I hate it. Hamada Saber*" (2,2,2). He explained that he had heard that this man had set fire to police cars and that is why he was arrested. He said that he did not necessarily believe this narrative, but regardless it was wrong for police to treat him this way. "*Because I have my rights, I'm a human body, so I have my rights, so why do that with him? … Even if I [set] fires before,*

*you can punish be by judgment. Not by this way. So I hate this picture.*" Karim saw this image as depicting a morally reprehensible act that was wrong regardless of what the victim was guilty of. This suits the larger world that Karim suggested throughout his interviews, within which there was a right and wrong procedure for every action. This interpretation also suggests that there were thugs involved in these protests and the police under Morsi were unfair.

These examples typify the variety of ways in which an image can be interpreted. Ginsburg's "Parallax Effect" (1995:64) is clearly in play here, as each participant clearly has their own unique perspective on each image. They created meaning for what they saw in the image based on their experiences and knowledge of cultural discourses (Pink 2001:82). This process of recalling narratives associated with the image to create an initial interpretation and suggest a world was usually almost instantaneous. Since the image then suggested a world in the eyes of the participant, they could feel if this world matched their subjectivity. At this point, based on the world they found the image suggested, participants either connected to or deflected the image. Connecting involved a rather straightforward acceptance and exploration of their initial interpretation of the image. When deflecting however, our discussion of the image was filled with a nuanced form of affective experience involving the rejection of the initial interpretation and attempts to avoid or discredit it. Deflection is a short-circuit in the process of interacting with the image in which the participant finds themselves opposed to the meaning that they have found within the image.

The participants' initial interpretations were a primary feature of the process that lead to their connecting to or deflection of the image. This creation of meaning was potentially almost instant; the participants could feel where they stood in relation to the image very quickly. However, if the participants lacked outside information about what the image depicted, their creation of meaning for the image was drawn out. This was an interesting difference between the image of Cairo by night and the other four images discussed above. The authors of each of these photographs obviously had very different intentions; the most important difference for the participants was the lack of narratives associated with the Cairo by night image. The other four images were associated with an event about which there were many different descriptions circulated by witnesses and

media. Amina's image was not associated with any event and there are no narratives concerning the image itself. The participants did their best to create interpretations anyway, as was illustrated in the examples. The participants focused more on objects in the image, as opposed to the other images, where they focused on negotiating narratives they had heard.

As Gaines (1999:90) suggested, mimetic power comes from the world suggested by the image. With narratives already in place, the "Bridge Battle" image already suggested several worlds to the participants, depending on how they navigated the narratives they had heard. With no narratives to work with, the participants could only use *what they could see* in Amina's image to create meaning. For example, Eyad's consideration of how many lights were on in the hotel, or Dalia's declaration of how beautiful this image was. The participants certainly could create meaning for an image without sources outside the image, but their ability to form an initial interpretation quickly was hindered in these situations. Thus, the part played by narratives in the creation of meaning for images should be considered in more depth.

## 2. Sources Used to Inform Interpretations

It is clear that the participants' interpretations did not take place in a vacuum, but rather prominently considered the various narratives they had heard concerning the images. Each image had been interpreted by a multitude of viewers and then these interpretations were communicated via word-of-mouth and the media to other viewers. "Narrative" is a word that I am using to refer to the interpretations by these sources that the participants had heard. The participants also used information from their personal experiences, and though I do not refer to these as "narratives," I examine personal experiences as a source for interpretation in this section as well. Participants' subjectivities were porous and open to their experiences of their social world (Kleinman and Fitz-Henry 2007:52). For this reason, the narratives that participants pointed to while creating interpretations and discussing their beliefs are extremely important for this thesis.

The participants trusted media sources to a certain extent. While considering the post-mortem image of Khalid Said, Dalia accessed the Internet twice in search of details

that she was not sure she remembered correctly (2,1,56). Karim described two television reporters whom he trusted for information about Egypt (1,2,39). Mohamed said that his most trusted source of narratives about the Egyptian Revolution was the website "Twitter." He explained that it is difficult for powerful people to fake things on Twitter, as data comes in from multiple people on the front lines (1,2,5). Haisam reported that several of his stories came from what he had heard from *Al Jezeera* (2,3,3). Television and Internet sources were sometimes viewed as well-informed and most participants had confidence in one or two of the media sources that they accessed.

However, this certainly does not mean that the participants passively regurgitated what they had heard. Their interpretations were a conglomeration of information they had heard from various sources, within which they had varying amounts of trust. Sometimes they introduced narratives with the intention of rejecting them outright, and other times they considered a new narrative and found it wanting.

To continue to use Dalia's example from above, she consulted Internet sources when describing Khalid Said's death, but referred to some of what she found as "*complete bullshit*" (2,1,58). When I presented the "Bridge Battle" image, Haisam mentioned that some sources had spread the rumor, which he did not accept, that police beat protesters while they were praying. He reported: "*It's* al Jezeera *channel and Egyptian channel they bring this*" (2,4,28). Mohamed actually submitted an image that he described as relaying his distrust for media sources, particularly those whose reports depicted those in power in a positive light (B 4-2,1,3). Mary said that she accessed a variety of different sources for news that she knew were biased and then compared them (1,1,83). She also made use of academic literature and face-to-face conversations with lower class people in her neighborhood.

Most participants described using an approach similar to Mary's. They gathered information from a variety of sources and used bits of data that they found most credible in their interpretation. However, as Mary mentioned, media is not the only source of narratives for interpretation. The participants all had access through their own personal social networks to first-hand information from individual people.

The participants placed considerably more trust in the narratives they gathered via word-of-mouth from family or friends. Cala's interpretation of an image of the "Camel

Battle" involved the suggestion that the thugs on camels who attacked protesters had taken pills that dulled pain (C 6-2,1,34). She reported that she got this information by word-of-mouth: "*I think it was [my husband] who told me that. Because, one of the workers in the factory [where he works] told him that…they were collecting people from his area and they gave them those pills.*"

Iman said that her sister had met with the army generals from SCAF and found them to be kind and considerate (1,1,13). She explained that all Egyptians loved the army, mostly because everyone has family that served in it at some point; she reported that her son was currently enlisted. I mentioned that I had heard that SCAF arranged the Port Said Incident as payback against the fans of *al Ahly* for taking part in protests against SCAF. She responded quickly that SCAF was not accustomed to political life so they made mistakes, but they did not seek out revenge. However, while considering images about the deaths of young people during the Port Said Incident, she reconsidered this opinion somewhat. "*I support the SCAF, but they make mistakes. This was about the Port Said event. When they killed the kids*" (2,2,17).

Mohamed and Karim's examples above can be understood as straddling the boundary between what I have called "media sources" and "word-of-mouth." Mohamed's twitter sources were actually individual people, not organizations, and he may or may not have had relationships with them outside of 140 character posts. Karim placed extra trust in two news reporters that he had never met, but he did say that he had watched them for a long time and formed a sort of one-way trust relationship over time.

The participants also trusted me as a source of narratives to a certain degree. Tamer interpreted an image of a crashed train to have taken place during Mubarak as a testament to how inept Mubarak was (C 10-2,2,32). When I told him that I had heard that this train actually crashed during Morsi's presidency, he believed me and changed his interpretation based on this new narrative.

Information gathered via word-of-mouth sources was included in the participants interpretations, mixed in with what they had heard from media. What makes this kind of source notable is that it often garnered more support than media sources. During interviews, I became aware that the participants felt that they were getting "the inside scoop" in these situations. The biases and agendas that they knew significantly influenced

how the information was portrayed in the media seemed to them to have been bypassed. I assume, however, that this "inside scoop" idea was limited in the same way that trust in well-informed media sources was limited. The participants pieced together what they believed to be the most likely events based on a conglomeration of data from various media and word-of-mouth sources.

Of course, the participants' own memories of personal experiences were a trusted source when interpreting an image. I am not referring to this as a source of "narratives" since I have reserved that term for stories that the participants accessed indirectly. However, I still consider personal experiences in this section, since they inform interpretation.

Cala's consideration of the image she submitted about the "Camel Battle" was also based on her personal experiences (C 6-2,1,34). She reported that she had to spend time in the area where those camel-riders lived. She said that she knew from personal experiences: "*Those people are still the worst people... they're horrible people.*" She provided several examples of their negative behavior. Her interpretation of these images was significantly informed by these negative personal experiences with the people from this area.

Tamer considered a video he submitted of a fight on the *Qasr al Nil* Bridge using mostly his own experiences (Qv1-2,2,2). He described how there were many protesters against only a few thugs who drove towards them on a truck while throwing rocks. He revealed that he was one of the men who then attacked the truck and dispatched the thugs. He said that the thugs who were beaten were taken to doctors, bandaged, and then passed on to the Army. Of course, he had absolute confidence in this version of events, as they were his own personal memories.

Haisam's consideration of his images depicting the "Friday of Rage" is notable because he was the author of the pictures he submitted. He explained that he and many other pro-Mubarak protesters went to the Square that day in order to see what was happening (2,3,4). Based on his own experiences while taking the photos, he interpreted these images to mean that there were more pro-Mubarak than anti-Mubarak protesters, and that protesters from the Square were indiscriminately dropping objects on people from their balconies. To him, these images suggest a thoughtlessly violent and destructive

world in Tahrir Square. He placed great emphasis on this interpretation of events, and had considerable faith in it since it was based on memories of his own past experiences.

The participants showed much more trust in their own experiences than narratives from other sources. They reported to me what they had seen with their own eyes with confidence, and several, like Haisam and Tamer above, placed considerable emphasis on the fact that they had seen these things for themselves. Though it is beyond the scope of this thesis, I will suggest briefly that these memories of things they had seen were interpreted the same way that these images were interpreted. In the "Comparing Interpretations" section above, it was clear that what the participants reported seeing in the image was subjective, and this idea is most likely true for reporting memories of personal experiences as well.

## 3. Hesitation to Interpret Images

The participants' considerations of Amina's image of night-time Cairo in the "Comparing Interpretations" section were short, simple and often hesitant. This turned out to be a notable theme during interviews. If the participants lacked knowledge of any narratives concerning the image and did not have relevant personal experiences, their formation of an initial interpretation was inhibited. They showed marked hesitation to form an interpretation based solely on the contents of the image. They often asked me for a narrative. When I declined to provide one, they carried on in a very careful manner, describing only what they could see in the image. Their interpretation of the image's contents was limited and "safe." Without additional information about narratives from me, they did not move on to describe or express connecting or deflecting behaviors.

Tamer is a young man who participated in protests against Mubarak, and defended the legitimacy of Morsi's presidency. He considered a picture of a shirtless man bleeding from his head and stumbling down the street through a crowd of people (C 7-2,2,36). He said he had never seen it before and wondered: "*He may be a thug, he may be a protester, I don't know.*" I then asked what he thought when viewing it for the first time. He said: "*No,* y3nni *(like), I can't judge anything before about what is this.*" I assured him that I was not asking for a story, but rather his thoughts on the image. I asked: "*What's this?*" He replied: "*An injured* y3nni *(like). An injured man. I will not*

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*support him* y3nni *(like). Is he trying to save his life? Or they put him to deliver it to police?... Yeah I don't know.*" Since he did not know a narrative associated with the image, he did not seem comfortable interacting with it.

It is notable that Tamer's consideration of an image earlier in the interview broke from this trend and interpreted an image using only distantly related narratives (C 10-2,2,33). The image was of a train accident, so he referenced narratives he knew about train accidents during Mubarak's time as president. He asserted that Mubarak was responsible for the accident, despite not actually being the one who drove the train. When I explained that the submitter of the image had said it was from Morsi's era, Tamer said: "*Ah, it is another train accident during Morsi. Maybe.*" I asked what he thought of this, and he responded by defending Morsi and suggesting that *felool*, remnants of Mubarak's regime, were sabotaging the railways. After moving ahead with interpretation without many narratives, Tamer found himself in the uncomfortable position of realizing after interpreting that this image may actually be one commonly used to discredit his position.

When George saw the image of night-time Cairo, he asked several questions about what this image meant and why someone had submitted it (A 2-2,2,58). He also was not familiar with an image of Anas Mohly, who had died in the Port Said Incident, and he was again hesitant to form an interpretation without narratives (C 8-2,2,67). His interpretation started and ended with "*This was someone loving Al Ahly football club, from what I'm seeing.*"

Eyad's first response upon seeing an image of the "Potato Boy" was to ask: "*Who is that kid?*" (A 3-2,2,13). When I asked for his interpretation without giving him this information, his consideration was very hesitant. He said: "*It looks like some kid in the Square.*" I asked why, and he responded by saying that he knew all the images submitted had to do with the Revolution, so this was a safe assumption to make. He spent the rest of his consideration trying to determine the boy's identity from what he could see in the image.

This behavior is in tune with Gaines' (1999:90) ideas about political mimesis and worlds suggested by images in documentaries; people are not inspired to move if they are not aware of narratives for the image pointing to a pertinent world. If an image is presented without any obvious attached narratives suggesting worlds, it can be puzzling

to the viewer. All that one has to create meaning from is what one can perceive in the image itself. What is more, the participants were aware that these images were submitted by others who had found significant meaning in them. They knew that these other participants had interpreted the image to suggest worlds. Thus, there was a world staring back at them that they could not perceive.

I have had personal experience with this confusion. Before I moved to Cairo in 2011, I came upon an image from the Egyptian Revolution of Copts holding hands in a circle around Muslims in prayer.[4] Without much knowledge of Egyptian religious differences (or, indeed, of Egypt in general), I had no narratives to inform my interpretation of the image. At the time, the image seemed like a bizarre cipher and my interpretation was very simple and based on what I could see in the image and my own general understandings of human behavior. However, as the image was the subject of a news article, I knew that other people in some other place felt very strongly about the image.

There is also another reason that the participants would hesitate to create interpretations of images they knew little or nothing about. An uninformed interpretation could endanger the viewer's credibility if they were to be confronted by someone more informed. I argued earlier that the meaning of images is subjective, and indeed Tamer's example above shows that the participants could change their interpretations after discovering new narratives. However, just because they are *able* to do this does not mean that they *want* to put themselves in that situation. I am going to suggest that interpreting an image again after already interpreting it a different way feels morally unfair.[5] As Jasper (1999:154) and Elster (1999:145) suggested, people do not just follow morals because they wish to avoid consequences; they do it because it feels good. Changing one's interpretation in order to defend one's position might feel like "cheating," and I postulate that there would also be consequences in everyday conversation for being inconsistent in this fashion.

I have outlined the variety of different types of sources that informed the participants' interpretations of images: media, word-of-mouth, personal experiences, and

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[4] Included in this thesis as Q 3.
[5] Tamer certainly appeared to feel uncomfortable at the time.

what they could see in the image. The participants did not passively repeat these narratives, but instead actively picked, chose, combined and rearranged the information they knew into their own interpretation of the image, describing their own version of events. However, if they lacked narratives or personal experiences with which to inform their interpretation, they were often extremely hesitant to do so. Their ability to create an initial interpretation almost instantly was inhibited, so they spent considerably more time considering what meanings the image might have. What they eventually created was an interpretation limited to descriptions of the image's contents. These limited interpretations meant that the participants were also hesitant to connect or deflect the image. These issues concerning the morality in interpretation are important to this thesis' research questions, but there are several topics that need to be covered before I discuss this in more depth. The next chapter considers why the participants found some worlds suggested by images' interpretations to be acceptable and others not. In order to do this, I explore the context of this thesis, political and social change in Egypt, in greater detail.

# Chapter III- Having Stakes in Egypt's Change


In the former chapter, I discussed how the participants used many types of sources to inform their interpretation of an image. This interpretation suggested a world that may or may not match their subjectivity. I then compared an introduction of each participant to their interpretation of an image to show the influence of their subjectivity on their creation of meaning for images. I explained that if their subjectivity matched the world their initial interpretation of the image suggested, they connected to the image, and if their subjectivity did not match this world, they rejected their initial interpretation and deflected the image.

Why is it that the participants only connected to images that they could interpret to match their subjectivities? Why do their subjectivity and the world they perceive to be suggested by the image need to agree in order to connect? Why do they deflect images, interpretations, and worlds that do not? This chapter addresses these questions by entering into further exploration of the nature of "subjectivity." Much of the field of social studies has focused on promoting an understanding of human nature as hardwired, unchanging, and autonomous. Kleinman and Fitz-Henry (2007:52) refer to this approach to the self as "biological reductionism." They assert that subjectivity is based on the situation of the subject as much as on their brain chemistry. The self is profoundly affected by where one stands politically, economically, historically, and culturally. Subjectivities are in a constant state of transformation based on the social position and experiences of the subject.

Kleinman and Fitz-Henry present the example of mothers in the extremely impoverished slum of Born Jesus in Brazil (2007:62). In this environment of severe hardship, and therefore high infant mortality rates, mothers do not develop attachments to or expend precious resources on newborns whose vitality suggests they cannot survive in such harsh conditions. Later they bury these children without significant grief or "natural maternal sentiments." This is not a case of moral depravity or psychoanalytical

repression. Their subjectivity, and by extension their affective experiences, are patterned by the political and economic context that these mothers inhabit. Their local world alters their perspective and therefore their moral attitudes of fairness and affective experiences.

Thus, the affect that the participants experienced was tinged with, among other things, culture; that is, certain ways of feeling were patterned by cultural understandings of affect. This is in tune with what Lutz and White (1986:417), Sedgwick (2003:93), and Russell (1991:444) described concerning the culturally influenced aspects of affect. Affect is not an isolated experience, but rather related to larger paradigms of what they have been shown is the way to feel in given situations. Thus, the affective experiences that participants described were not just their autonomous reactions, but also part of their culture and tradition.

This understanding of the self as open to social experience means that, in order to properly conceive of participants' subjectivities and affective experiences, I need to consider the political, historical, and cultural world that they inhabit. A major element of this consideration involves the exploration of The historical transformation in how Egyptians thought about the potential for change. Prior to the 25th of January protests, the majority of people in Egypt were, for whatever reason, not invested in political or social change. However, at some point near the end of his thirty-year presidency, this began to change. This became suddenly evident during the 18 Days of Protest, when political ideas and beliefs about governance became part of everyday life and conversation. Abruptly, Egypt became a much more politicized country, and people in Egypt began to care about the outcome of the Revolution for ideological, practical, or belonging-based reasons. This chapter will also explore of participants' stakes in the issues that the images were associated with. They were invested in the outcome of the political and social changes in Egypt, and this invested them in the worlds that they believed these images suggested. In short, they *cared* about what the images might be suggesting. This chapter considers the nature of the stakes that the participants had in the Revolution and its images.

## 1. How Egyptians Became Invested

The opinions of journalists and participants alike differ on many details concerning Egypt's state of affairs during the thirty years of Mubarak's presidency. All

agree that Mubarak had been made president after the death of Anwar Sadat in 1981 and had kept the country in a "State of Emergency" constantly since then. Egypt's government was simultaneously a "soft state," unable to enforce many of its laws, and a "hard state," tough enough to suppress those who opposed it (Amin 2011:147).

There were a great deal of pressing political and social issues affecting the lives of Egyptians during this period. The press was declared to be free, and seemed to be free enough to even attack the president's family. Some believed that this freedom was only technical, as opposition journalists were often arrested. There were free elections, with established politicians such as Ayman Nour and Nu-man Guma competing against Mubarak. However, some believed that these elections were rigged and the opponents were systematically discredited or arrested as the time of elections drew near (Amin 2011:157). The economy was so weak that the majority of Egyptians struggled to meet their basic needs. The poor often had to go without bread or water for long periods, resulting in demonstrations in small towns in 2007 and 2008 that were collectively referred to as a "Revolution of the Thirsty." Many began to accuse the president of ensuring that only a small minority had access to wealth, while other insisted that Mubarak was a cunning "far-sighted strategist" who was preventing Egypt from descending into further poverty (El-Mahdi and Marfleet 2009:2).

However, despite these pressing issues, most Egyptians were not invested in political or social change during Mubarak's time. There were activist movements, but they were not able to rouse enough support to cause the significant changes they aimed for (Saad 2012:64). Their demonstrations were large enough to draw attention, but they were always easily outnumbered by police. The public masses were not roused to action and the majority did not discuss politics in everyday situations during the majority of Mubarak's presidency (Pacillo 2011:3). What obstacles were discouraging Egyptians from becoming invested in social and political change?

Amr El-Shobaki considered this in his article "Egypt is not Tunisia" after the overthrow of President Ben Ali in Tunisia elicited the question: "Could that happen in Egypt?" (Saad 2012:64). El-Shobaki regretted that Egyptians had long been too entrenched in sectarian issues to unite and work towards the common goal of change. He pointed to the part played by religious fundamentalism, encouraging people to fight for

the agenda of their religious group rather than their country, as well as encouraging distrust towards other groups (El-Shobaki 2011). How could Egyptians mobilize to create real change when they were preoccupied with, for instance, the rivalry between Muslims and Copts? This was true for political as well as religious groups. Egyptian political parties were unable to unite to oppose Mubarak throughout his thirty years in power as they squabbled over their ideological differences (Pacillo 2011:4).

El-Shobaki also suggested that Mubarak's regime was less autocratic than Ben Ali's, allowing enough freedoms and opposition for the people to vent, thus preventing large-scale hostility from building up (El-Shobaki 2011). The long standing "emergency law" gave the government power to wipe out any opposition in the name of national security, but they allowed a small amount of rebellion (Pacillo 2011:3). Osama confirmed this during one of our interviews. He described how his group was allowed to hold smaller protests and publish oppositional materials to a limited extent without being assailed by police. However, security forces would always keep tight control over these demonstrations, surrounding them with riot police that well outnumbered the demonstrators (1,1,4).

Dalia suggested another possible cause for this silence on political issues. She described how she, as a young child, was told by her parents not to speak ill of Mubarak in public, lest she be overheard by Mubarak's secret service (1,1,21). When young Dalia said: "*We should kill Mubarak,*" in a taxi, her parents responded: "*You cannot say that. You cannot say that in the street, you can't say that in public, be very careful.*" Dalia explained to me that Mubarak had repurposed his secret service to spy on the people in Egypt in search of those who might oppose him. She reported that, after Mubarak was removed, her dentist confessed to being one of these secret service members. The emergency law in place in Egypt since 1981 gave the government, in particular the Interior Ministry, the power to crack down on opposition within Egypt in a variety of ways (Marfleet 2009:23). Perhaps fear of reprisals from unseen listeners kept people in Egypt from speaking their thoughts about politics.

Karim, who introduced himself as a supporter of Mubarak, explained that people did not talk about politics during Mubarak's presidency because there was nothing to discuss (1,2,35). In our first interview, I asked him if people talked about politics during

Mubarak's time. He said: "*No, no, no. But not because we are afraid or scared, no, no, no. Because we know that Mubarak will be the president. We will not argue, not challenge… and even I didn't go to any election. The first time to go to election, after Revolution.*" Mubarak had prevented change and maintained his power for decades, despite limited opposition, and so there was little for the majority of Egyptians to discuss concerning political or social change (Pacillo 2011:3). Amina suggested that during Mubarak's time people were better off than after the Revolution began, so they had less to complain about (1,1,13). "*People's conditions, especially economically speaking, was much much much better in 2011 than now.*" She emphasized that things were not perfect during Mubarak's time, but they were better. Most Egyptians revolted "*out of boredom.*"

Whether it was because of sectarian preoccupations, lack of motivation, fear of reprisal, simple contentment, or a combination of all of these, all these perspectives agree that many people did not feel they should, or could, have a stake in political or social change in Egypt (Saad 2012:64). However, ten years prior to the 25 January 2011 protests, activism been growing in Egypt. Groups like "The Egyptian Movement for Change" began bringing together larger and larger groups of people (El-Mahdi 2009:87). In mid-2004, street protests became a prominent part of daily life, though they mostly focused on socio-economic issues and avoided political demands. A growing workers' movement held labor strikes and protests that the police were unable to crush outright, as they had done to demonstrations for decades. In 2007, laws were passed making it possible for suspected terrorists to be tried by military tribunals; arrests of protesters increased, but attendance at protests did not (Pacillo 2011:4). Osama, who had been arranging political demonstrations since Mubarak began his presidency, described seeing more people with him at rallies each year as 2011 approached (1,1,7).

These desires for change built up for a decade and reached their peak during the 18 Days of Protest. Millions of Egyptians overcame the obstacles above and entered into often dangerous situations in and around Tahrir Square because they had a stake in the issues at hand. Those who supported Mubarak or disapproved of the protesters' methods also took to the streets to promote their perspective on these issues. Political and social change became the primary topic of conversation amongst politicians and taxi drivers alike (Saad 2012:64). Whether or not they took the streets, nearly every Egyptian now

had a perspective on the changes in Egypt that they promoted in conversation. They were motivated to do so because they were invested in the outcome of the political and social changes in Egypt. There were many issues whose potential outcomes Egyptians were invested in promoting.

One of the original goals of the 25th of January protest was to demonstrate against police brutality. Even those who supported Mubarak had little appreciation for the minister of interior at that time, who was known for arbitrary arrests and torture. Police corruption and brutality were commonplace in the years leading up to 2011 (Ibrahim 2011:1348). On the 6th of June 2010, a young man named Khalid Said was dragged from an Internet café in Alexandria by the police. According to activists, he was then beaten to death by the police officers, who suspected him of distributing evidence of their corrupt behavior (Wedeman 2010). Though the government insisted that Said had died from drug related activities, this did not prevent the nationwide "moral shock" that followed (Nepstad and Smith 2001:158).

This gave many human rights groups a catalyst around which to unite and mobilize people. Though their initial protests were forcibly dispersed by police, Said's death led to the "We Are Khalid Said" Facebook page where supposedly the original plans to protest in Tahrir Square were created (Saad 2012:64). This page made considerable use of a post-mortem image of Said. This image and the narratives associated with it suggested a world that was "pertinent" to Egyptian viewers; they had witnessed the routine brutality and corruption of their police force for many years (Gaines 1999:90 ; Marfleet 2009:23). Karim explained that corrupt police felt like they were gods, and people were terrified of them because, as far as justice was concerned, these men were untouchable (1,1,17). The image and narrative of deceased Said suggested a world that Egyptians knew to be pertinent, and upon connecting to the image, they were moved to action. Haisam, Karim, Dalia, and Mohamed all agreed that the injustice of police, especially in the case of Said's death, was a major motivating factor for themselves or others to attend protests.

Another investment in change had to do with Gamal, Mubarak's son. Mubarak was taking steps to ensure that his presidential power would pass to his son after his death. This involved a subtle but still noticeable ad campaign featuring Gamal in a

favorable light; for instance, he was depicted alongside famous football stars in advertisements. Mubarak also began undermining the roles of the military in the government, as they openly opposed the passing of the presidency from father to son (Amin 2011:157). Even those Egyptians that supported Mubarak and disapproved of the 18 Days of Protest did not support this behavior on Mubarak's part. They disapproved for ideological reasons; it was against their moral attitudes of fairness for a president to come into power by a means other than election. Haisam, despite being a strong supporter of Mubarak, explained that during Mubarak's time he was especially concerned about Gamal becoming president (1,1,1). Haisam found it unfair that a president should come to power because his father was president. Haisam actually attended protests on the 25th of January because, at the time, the protester's demands had to do with removing the minister of interior and preventing Gamal from taking over the presidency.

These initial demonstrations on the 25th of January 2011 were organized and attended primarily by the educated middle class, but their slogans and goals focused on improving the economic situation of the lower classes as well as the middle class (Ibrahim 2011:1348). The original demands were as follows: 1) the reduction of poverty and unemployment, as well as setting a minimum wage, 2) the end of state of emergency, 3) the removal of the minister of interior, and 4) the establishment of a limit on the number of terms a president was permitted. The poor were initially hesitant to take the risk of becoming involved in demonstrations. However, the demands made on the 25th addressed issues that were pertinent to their lives, so the poor soon joined the middle class in Tahrir Square. This was important, as the overwhelming number of poor people who participated made the overturning of Mubarak's regime possible (Ibrahim 2011:1348).

There were many reasons that Egyptians were interested in the changes that began during the 18 Days of Protest and the time of political and social change that followed. The examples above are three prominent reasons for the change in the outlook of Egyptians from avoiding these issues to actively seeking to affect change. Egyptians sought to influence these changes because they were invested in the outcomes. Many of those who joined protests against police brutality did so because this issue affected their everyday life; they had to avoid the corruption of police officers on a daily basis. Many

opposed Gamal Mubarak coming to power for ideological reasons; his presidency would conflict with their moral attitudes of fairness. The masses of poor and middle-class Egyptians were invested in economic change for slightly different reasons. The poor had a stake in this outcome of change because their everyday life was affected; if Egypt's unemployment and poverty were reduced, they would not struggle as much to obtain sustenance. The middle class may not have struggled as much to obtain food, but they found it unfair that a corrupt government horded resources while the poor starved. Of course, this is not to say that the poor did not also have an ideological stake in addition to their practical one. Finally, as the protests against and for Mubarak began to grow, it became clear that El-Shobaki was wrong is asserting that Egyptians were too preoccupied with promoting their religion or political differences to unite over issues affecting their nation (El-Shobaki 2011). Many Egyptians had a stake in the outcome of the Revolution because they felt a sense of belonging to the political movements, or Egypt, that superseded sectarian strife. Exploring these types of stakes in the outcome of changes in Egypt gives valuable insight into how these stakes were an important factor in participants' subjectivities.

## 2. Types of Stakes in the Revolution

The 25th of January protest and subsequent protests created a notable change in the Egyptian cultural mindset. Those who participated or simply supported these demonstrations found themselves empowered to create change. Those who were opposed to this change became invested in the issues in the very process of establishing themselves as opposition. The participants I spoke to exemplified this phenomenon. Most participants described becoming invested in political and social change during or directly leading up to the 18 Days of Protest. Osama and Mary were two exceptions to this trend. Osama belonged to the minority who had been involved in arranging and attending political movements for many years. Mary came from a politically invested family from a bygone era; her story of the changes in Egypt began with the end of the Second World War.

Each participant described having "stakes" in the outcome of Egypt's changes. These stakes were the factors that motivated them to care about the issues associated with

the images they saw. Their investment encouraged their interpretation of images, as the meaning they found could support or discredit their perspective. Thus, these stakes were as diverse and varied as the participants' perspectives of images: some were concerned about personal matters that would be affected by changes in Egypt, others cared about the outcomes of change for moral reasons, and still others felt that they belonged to a group that needed to be defended. While a particular stake usually motivated a participant more than others, each participant possessed all three stakes to varying degrees.

Below, I present three types of stakes that stood out during our interviews: practical, ideological, and belonging-based. Since each participant had multiples stakes, I selected the most typical examples of each stake to present, but do not wish to suggest that any of these stakes complete defined a participant or their investment.


### A) Everyday Life

The first and most straightforward type of stakes in the Revolution were *practical* ones. Participants felt that their personal well-being was wrapped up in the outcomes of the social and political changes in Egypt. Certainly, all the participants' lives were affected in some way, but several of them described feeling as if their well-being was significantly tied to these changes. I explore the situations of those participants in order to exemplify this type of stake. Berger and Luckmann (1966:37) present a useful approach to practical stakes with his ideas about "everyday life." Reality is subjectively meaningful and interpreted by humans living in it. "Everyday life" is the biggest, most important part of this reality that individuals spend most of the time in and are most knowledgeable about. Changes or intrusions into this everyday life have a bigger impact on people than events that do not affect it.

As an artist living downtown most of his life, Eyad's experiences of the 18 Days of Protest are an example of this. Before these protests, he lived, worked, and relaxed in or near Tahrir Square. This space was part of his everyday life. Thus, it was a shock to him and his routine when millions of protesters literally invaded this space. His story of the 18 Days of Protest began during his daily walk: "*I had to go through Tahrir and I was there and I saw my friends there like on the 25th*" (1,1,7). Eyad integrated this intrusion into his everyday life and spent most of the 18 Days of Protest in Tahrir Square. He had a

stake in the changes that these protests brought because it was the space of his everyday life that was being transformed.

Eyad had another practical stake in the outcome of these changes. Due to problems with his citizenship, he feared being forced to leave the country he had lived in his entire life (1,1,10). During the 18 Days of Protest, he felt accepted and safe amongst the protesters. His selection of images emphasizes this, and his presentation of them focused on community, cooperation, and acceptance of minorities. For instance, he presented an image of protesters carrying a soldier on their shoulders (E 5-2,1,19). Much of his consideration of this image focused on an unveiled girl on the edge of the picture who he perceived to be accepted by the devout-looking Muslims in the group. The success of a protest that stood for these values could mean that these values would spread, making Egypt a better place for Eyad. He was invested in the 18 Days of Protest because his well-being was directly affected by its outcome.

Both Haisam and Karim were involved in businesses that were affected by the changes in Egypt. They needed stability and a strong government in Egypt in order for their businesses to survive. Haisam expressed frustration with the Muslim Brotherhood and their failure to improve Egypt's economy and standing amongst other nations (1,2,22). He described becoming so frustrated that he wanted to smash his television set. Karim told me that he was frustrated with the Revolution because of its end results (1,1,19). Because the Revolution destroyed Egypt's stability, there was "*No economy, no security, no tourism.*" Both of them said that they hoped that Morsi could be removed from presidency by protesters so that a new, more capable person could take his place. They had a stake in the outcome of these protests because their everyday lives were directly affected by it.

Amina spent the 18 Days of Protest in a small town far from the protests. However, her everyday life was still directly affected by these events. Her last semester of college was that spring, and the destruction and chaos of the protests in Tahrir Square could have lead to this semester being canceled and her graduation postponed. She said: "*I was so concerned about getting to school*" (1,1,20). She wished the destructive people in Tahrir Square would "*shut up*" so that "*normal life*" could resume. She was invested in

the issue of whether or not the protests in Tahrir Square were legitimate because she had a stake in it. Her "*normal life*," or everyday life, was affected by these events.

### B) Ideology

Moral stakes were based on moral attitudes of fairness. Many participants believed strongly about issues that did not directly affect them because they saw the procedures or outcomes of the actions of a person or group as unfair. Jasper (1999:154) discusses how moral attitudes about what is fair and unfair are an important motivating factor for protests. People act on these ideologies even when doing so does not benefit them directly; they do it because being moral feels good (Elster 1999:145).

This was an extremely important factor in the Egyptian Revolution. The educated middle class that first organized and participated in the protests on the 25th of January had demands for more than their personal needs (Ibrahim 2011:1348). The fact that their slogans had to do with the problems of the poor is a major reason that the lower classes eventually overcame their hesitation and joined the demonstrations. A wide variety of demographics attended these protests for ideological reasons rather than reasons I have deemed "practical."

Dalia's everyday life would not have been significantly affected by the success of the 18 Days of Protest. In fact, she informed me that her family was better off financially before Mubarak was removed from the presidency. Her life was not invaded in the same way that Eyad's was and her trips to Tahrir Square were what Berger and Luckmann (1966:37) referred to as "expeditions." She left her everyday life in order to attend the demonstrations, experienced a new environment, and then returned to her everyday life. However, she had a significant moral stake in the outcome of Egypt's changes. "*Why was I in Tahrir? I was living a fine life. I was live in a villa…I have a pool and a nice garden… I went to a really good school… Why should I care what the regime was like? No, I was there to fight for the rights of the people who couldn't*" (1,1,57). She described herself and her family as very nationalistic, and for this reason motivated to care about social and political change (1,1,15). When they were told that the demonstrations in Tahrir Square were running low on food and water, they took it upon themselves to supply these items. Dalia's stake in the outcome was based on her belief that the regime

was dealing unfairly with other people and, as a result, she felt that she should act to correct this unfairness. Her investment in the demonstrations was based on ideology.

Gamal described identifying with the protesters in Tahrir Square, but did not participant in the 18 Days of Protest until he heard about the violence towards protesters in the "Camel Battle" (1,2,1). He said: "*Maybe I want to go before, but I don't have enough reason to push me to go.*" Gamal had to go against his father's wishes in order to attend the protests, but after he heard of the people who died that day "*I think [not attending the protests] make me feeling not good*" (1,1,18). Gamal explained that he felt that the protesters were fighting and dying for him, and so "*I start to go because, I feeling I must go.*" Gamal's discomfort about staying home from the protests suggests that while acting based on moral attitudes of fairness feels good, not acting feels bad. He saw the actions of Mubarak's regime during the "Camel Battle" as morally unfair, and this gave him a stake in the outcome and ultimately motivated him to attend the protests.

Moral attitudes of fairness are also what Gamal cited as his reason for supporting the presidency of Morsi. He explained that he believed a president should be given four years to prove himself: "*I give to him my vote. I know this man he stay four years. His chance, four years. His test, four years. Okay. After four years I know [if] he failed or win*" (1,3,12). He considered this to be what the protests he participated in were fighting for. If what the Revolution established was torn down, the sacrifice of those people who died protesting would be for nothing, and "*all of the country fall down.*" Gamal believed that it was morally unfair not to give Morsi what he had earned by being voted president. This ideology gave Gamal a stake in the outcome of the protests during Morsi's presidency.

These participants had a stake in the outcome of political and social change in Egypt because of their moral attitudes of fairness. When they perceived that the government, protesters, or any other group were treating another group unfairly, they felt that their moral principles were being violated (Ester 1999; Jasper 1999:154). Once participants witnessed this violation, they often felt duty bound to act to correct the unfairness. This invested them in the outcome of the protests; they became involved because the political and social changes in Egypt promoted or conflicted with their ideologies.

## C) Belonging, Participation, and Activism

Another means of having a stake in the Revolution was through loyalty to a particular group. Many participants "identified" with a group, in so much as their identity, or subjectivity, became intertwined with this group. This could be a political group with officially stated goals and membership, such as a religious group. However, the majority of participants spoke of loyalty to a "group" more vaguely, as in "the protesters in Tahrir Square," or, "the Egyptian people." The group was them and they were the group; they felt that they "belonged" to the group. This gave them a stake in the outcome of the group's cause, because they cared about what happened to fellow members of the group. This was exponentially true when this "belonging" was coupled with participation with the group. Putting their bodies into the role of helping the group promote its cause created a stronger bond with the group.

One important form of belonging was religious. Cala felt that Copts were being violently singled out because of their beliefs due to the religious nature of the Muslim Brotherhood-backed presidency (1,2,2). She cared about the outcome of the protests against Morsi because she was frustrated with the situation of Copts and desired an Egypt without sectarian violence for her daughter to grow up in. Mary expressed a similar stake in the outcome of the protests against Morsi. She described a very strong connection with Copts, followed closely by her dedication to Egypt as a whole. She felt that the Muslim Brotherhood was a threat to her group, and the fight against Morsi was, for the Copts, a fight for survival (2,1,8). Mary's loyalty to her group invested her in the outcome of the protests against Morsi.          Religious groups were a strong form of belonging. First, they were an important part of some people's identity; they might refer to themselves as "a Muslim" or "a Copt." Second, someone who identifies with a religion will likely have met and bonded with other people who identify themselves in the same way. Third, many of these people participate in religious activities with fellow members of that religion, which facilitates more bonding than only identification. Participation with other members while working towards the same goal forms powerful bonds. Turner theorized that such cooperation towards a common goal can create an environment of uncompromising equality and lasting bonds (Turner 1967:101).

Of course, religious groups were not the only groups of people to which participants described feeling that they belonged. Gamal identified with the protesters in Tahrir Square during the 18 Days of Protest. He participated with them in demonstrations four times during this period, and he described it as an extremely moving experience (1,2,1). He said all four of these experiences were "*very, very, nice days… I liked it.*" Explaining the feelings he experienced in Tahrir Square proved difficult for him and he said that most people did not believe him when he told them. He described physical manifestations of the powerful feelings in the Square: "*It was amazing… You can find we cry and smiling.*" It is notable that he used the pronoun "we" here, and multiple times throughout his description. Not only is it clear that he experienced strong feelings during these activities, but he also identified strongly with the people he was participating with.

This introduces an important element in this consideration of loyalty in the Revolution: participation in protests. Those who participated in demonstrations developed a bond with the group of people that they perceived themselves as participating with. This bond became an important part of their subjectivity by strengthening existing, or creating new, bonds of belonging to this group. Having forged these bonds, participants had a stake in the group's well-being in much the same way that they had a stake their own well-being, making these bonds part of participants' subjectivities. As a result, they defended what they perceived as this group's interests while considering images. They did this by connecting to images that suggested worlds that promoted the cause of this group and matched their subjectivity.

This participation bond was especially important to Eyad. Eyad lived and worked in close vicinity with Tahrir Square, and the 18 Days of Protest were a significant part of his life. He took pictures of activities in the Square and helped distribute food to protesters. His selection of images focused primarily on illustrating the unity and cooperation of those in the Square, and he consistently used the pronoun "we" when discussing their activities. He described feeling a strong connection to the people he spent time with in the Square during the protest (1,2,40) and remorse when this bond ended (2,1,19). He expressed sorrow at the outcome of this movement and how this unity and cooperation had dissipated: "*I realized that was the end of the story because people lost their faith*" (2,2,19). It is clear that participation in these protests formed a strong stake in

their outcome for Eyad. He formed a bond with the demonstrators and their cause, and it affected him deeply when he perceived this cause as failing.

Dalia was also profoundly affected by her participation in the same protests. Unlike Eyad, she lived far from Tahrir Square and visited it on a limited number of occasions. She went with her family on multiple trips and helped supply and distribute food to protesters. In her account of this participation, she emphasized the feelings of unity and belonging that she felt there. She said: "*It was really nice. And it was very… it was very uniting you know? It was a feeling of power, feeling of being at home, you know. Feeling like we are all here for the same reason, we're all here to see the regime go down*" (1,1,15). She went on to say: "*And so it just, it made me feel so connected to everyone, you know. I mean, I was proud, I was so proud to be an Egyptian. I was so proud of my people, you know*" (1,1,22). Similar to Gamal and Eyad, she also consistently used "we" when discussing the activities of protesters in the Square. Dalia was confident that the cause she was part of in the Square was successful in improving Egypt, and vehemently defended this perspective. Her participation in the protests helped her form a bond with the people she protested with, and this belonging gave her a stake in the issue.

However, participation did not have this affect when participants were simply present at the protests. Gamal attended SCAF protests, but did not agree with their goal or methods (1,2,11). He explained: "*I don't agree about it… just I go to see… what happen exactly, for real.*" Haisam also attended protests that he did not "*agree about*" with the intention to witness rather than participate. He described what he saw on the 28th of January, 2011, from a bridge overlooking Tahrir Square. He said that he went there "*to see what's happening. I was there and I was a witness*" (2,3,1). Eyad went to an anti-S.C.A.F. protest with the intention of participating (1,2,3). However, he soon left "*because people there… were not really representing me. I was not feeling a connection.*" Participants who put themselves in these situations consistently used the pronoun "they" when discussing what they witnessed rather than the "we" that those above used. It is clear that while these participants attended these protests, they did not feel that they "belonged."

All three of these people described not being able to participate in a protest because they disagreed with the goals or methods associated with the protest. This suggests that the reverse is true; participation is a means of showing loyalty to the group one participates with, solidifying oneself as part of that group. Jenssen (2009:144) suggests that people see with their whole body in the form of feelings. Gaines (1999:90) says that seeing other bodies in motion inspires movement in one's own body. Actually taking part in this movement with the bodies that inspired it was an extremely meaningful experience for participants. Those that participated in protests spent considerable time describing the feelings of unity and togetherness that they felt during their participation. They described becoming more bonded to the cause that the group was striving towards as a result of being "part of" the group. Participation influenced their subjectivity, investing them to a greater extent in defending the group they perceived themselves as participating with and belonging to. Being thus invested, participants were motivated to connect to images that matched this aspect of their subjectivity and deflect those that did not.

Activism affected participants' subjectivities differently than just participation. "Activism" here refers to involvement in a political group with established goals and methods involving political and social change. This includes such entities as the "Sixth of October" group and the "Revolutionary Socialists," who were organized with the intent of promoting the realization of particular worlds in Egypt. Interestingly, participants involved in such groups did not describe themselves as being loyal to that group, but rather to "The Revolution." They were bonded, not the political group, but to the same vaguely defined groups that the participators above were bonded to: "the Egyptian People," "Those in Tahrir Square," or "The Revolution." However, as I show here with an example, this bond was slightly different from those that simply participated.

Osama explained that he had helped establish the "Revolutionary Socialists" political group that had been opposing Mubarak's policies for many years before 2011 (1,1,2). However, the loyalty that he described in his interviews was not to this group, but rather to the anti-Mubarak protesters from the 18 Days of Protest. For years he had been working to encourage what eventually happened on the 25th of January and subsequent days. He spoke of the mass demonstration in Tahrir Square as if it were a "child" that he

had "raised." During the 18 Days of Protest, he agonized over the fate of the demonstrators, worrying that perhaps the movement would not sustain itself or that many people would be hurt (1,2,24). He described feeling "*euphoria*" whenever the protesters succeeded and anxiety whenever the police retaliated. He was concerned for the protesters' well-being while also longing for their success.

He described a strong bond with "The Revolution" he helped to organize rather than the political group that he established. The group of people in Tahrir Square was something he had worked for years to encourage, and so he had a kind of "parent-child" loyalty to it, and responsibility for it. In this way, his activism affected his subjectivity differently than mere participation affected other participants. He did not just feel "part of" the protesters, but rather formed a stronger bond, comparable to that of a parent to a child that involved seeing himself as responsible for the protesters organization and well-being.

## 3. Invested in Meaning

I have provided the context for the participants' investment in the Revolution and considered three important types of investment that participants described. The purpose of all this consideration was to provide an answer to the question "Why?" Why could participants only connect to images that they could interpret to match their subjectivities? Why did they deflect images that did not match their subjectivities? My answer to these questions is that participants were invested in the outcomes of change.

The participants in this thesis had stakes in the issues they felt the images spoke about. Gaines (1999:90) suggests that when an image suggests a world pertinent to viewers, it can inspire viewers to move. She provides the example of the video of Rodney King being beaten by police moving people from his area to action. The world this video suggested, in which police were corrupt and violent to minority groups, was pertinent to these viewers, so they were moved to action. In other words, these viewers had a stake in the world; in this case, they had what I have dubbed "practical stakes." Stakes are what make "pertinent worlds" pertinent to individual people.

Asad (2003:67) suggests that pain is an experience that can be communicated with others. In order to communicate these feelings, one needs to provide evidence of

one's pain, but one also needs a particular kind of relationship with the person the pain is being communicated to. He mentions that this is also true of pleasure. Viewers can have this "particular kind of relationship" with images; it is defined by their subjectivity and their stake in the event being depicted.

As a result of these stakes, participants interpreted images to match their subjectivities and connected with them, and if they were unable to do this, they deflected the meanings they perceived in the images. They did this because they believed that their interpretation of the images' meanings had an effect on the issues they were invested in. It would seem that they were correct to believe this. Ginsburg (1995:64) explains that the meaning of an image is subjective, and Gaines (1999:90) describes how the meanings found in these images suggested worlds and it was these worlds that stirred people to action. Thus, by interpreting images to suggest a world that matched their subjectivity, participants could claim the image and use it to stir other people to action.

Narratives that participants had heard were utilized in their creation of meaning. This relationship with narratives applies in reverse as well; participants' knew that the interpretations they created could have an important impact on other people's interpretation of the image. The constant redefinition of images from various perspectives that Ginsburg (1995:64) and Mitchell (2005:8) described could also be defined as a "battle of meaning." Participants engaged in this battle by interpreting images so that their meaning suggested a world that matched the world the participant were invested in legitimizing.

They were invested in legitimizing this world because doing so: had an impact on their everyday life, was in line with their moral attitudes of fairness, and promoted the causes of the groups they belonged to. These stakes were not just something that participants *had*, they were part of who the participants were, part of their subjectivity. Thus, participants were seeking to show the legitimacy of their perspective as part of a survival instinct. This explains why their interpretation of the images was not a drawn out cognitive process, but rather immediate feeling (Slovic 2004:311). When they viewed an image, they created meaning for it almost instantly by means of affect. When these interpretations suggested worlds that they were invested in legitimizing, they could connect to the image. When their initial interpretations suggested worlds that violated

their subjectivity by contradicting worlds that they were invested in legitimizing, they deflected the image. These unacceptable images and the worlds they suggested were seen as assaults on the worlds that participants were invested in legitimizing. In the next chapter, I show how interpretation was defined by subjectivities and extremely important to understanding why and how participants connected or deflected certain images.

# Chapter IV- The Nature of Connecting and Deflecting

I have considered the part played by subjectivities in the interpretation of images to suggest worlds. I have also described the stakes that motivate viewers to connect or deflect images in order to legitimize their subjectivity. This chapter explores how exactly "connecting" and "deflecting" played out in interviews. I have already introduced these concepts to some extent in the introduction, but a number of questions about these ideas remain unexplored. What does connecting and deflecting look and sound like? In what ways did a participant who was connecting treat narratives differently than one who was deflecting?

Before I delve into these questions, I should first consider the basis for this approach to understanding affective experience. Throughout my fieldwork, fourteen Egyptians and I considered a variety of images from the Egyptian Revolution. As the participants considered these images, I paid attention to what they said as well as their facial expressions, hand gestures, and vocal patterns. I began to see a distinct pattern of closeness when considering some images and avoidance while considering others. It seemed that, in the latter situations, participants were attempting to avoid affective expressiveness.

Sontag and MacDougall shed some light on this pattern. Sontag (2003:11) finds that people reject images that clash with "cherished pieties" by suggesting that they are staged fabrications. They deflect images that threaten important aspects of their subjectivities. MacDougall (2005:23) showed that expressions of affect are not only a report of feeling, but also a means to feel. When someone says "That makes me sad" or weeps, these are not just evidences of affective experience, but part of affective experience itself. In short, people feel what they do and say. In this chapter I will show that, when faced with an image that clashed with cherished pieties, participants did not just avoid "expressions" of certain affective experiences, but rather they attempted to avoid certain affective experiences. In this chapter, I will argue that they avoided

affective experiences that would validate the worlds they felt were suggested by the image.

In order to accomplish this, I will first focus on the two forms of affective experience that became clear in the course of the interviews with participants: connecting and deflecting. One involved expressive discussion and personalized consideration of the image. The participants' affective experience would often be clearly shown on their faces as they laughed, frowned, or cried. They were usually expressive about how the image made them feel and their opinions about what they believe happened. They lingered on the image, considering the people and objects within the images' frames. At times, they even described experiencing physical pain. Since participants were creating a connection to the images, I came to call this form of interaction "connecting."

The second form of interaction lacked emotiveness and expressiveness in favor of a factual and indifferent demeanor. Participants' facial expressions were often flat. Consideration of the image avoided discussion of the participants' experience of it and instead focused on information. This information was often neutral and void of opinion. Other times, they focused on discrediting the image and the narratives they associated with it. Participants avoided affective experiences that would validate the world suggested image by presenting themselves as disinterested, indifferent, or unsympathetic. Expression of affective experience is an important aspect of affective experience itself. Thus, participants were not just avoiding the expression of certain feelings, but also the experience of them. I dubbed this form of interaction "deflecting."[6]

In this chapter, I seek to show the distinctness of connecting and deflecting by using an analysis of my interviews with participants about images from the Egyptian Revolution. I then examine how participants discussed the narratives they associated with the image differently when connecting and deflecting. Finally, I explain the importance of meaning for the affective experience of images.

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[6] It should be noted that connecting or deflecting based on one's subjectivity is behavior not limited to the consideration of images. These aspects of affective experience are part and parcel to the consideration of subjectivities, For instance, when meeting a new person, one can usually quickly determine if they are friendly or a potential threat. After this interpretation of the situation, one then connects or deflects the new person appropriately.

## 1. Bodies, Faces, and Voices

During interviews, I took note of the body language, facial expressions, and vocal patterns of participants as we talked. These notes are fairly general, as my purpose is to show that during connecting, something happened, while deflecting involved a lack of happening. For facial expressions, I have used simple definitions gathered from an article by Carroll and Russell (1996:205) and another by Keltner (2007). These include frowning, gasping, laughter, genuine smiling (also known as a "Duchenne smile"), polite smiling, etc. I keep my reports of body language simple and concentrate mostly on the flurries of movement that occurred, or did not occur. My presentation of vocal patterns involves volume, speed, and emphasis.

There was a distinct difference between the connecting and deflecting non-vocal behavior and voice patterns of participants. While discussing an image they connected with, participants were usually very expressive. They laughed, smiled, frowned, waved their hands for emphasis, and spoke in very emotive ways. When deflecting, less expressive faces were used; participants seemed bored and dismissive, and their voice rarely rose or fell with any significance. In the following section, I explore these two instances in more detail using examples from the interviews.

When connecting to an image, participants were generally emotive and passionate. Iman was a dedicated opponent of Morsi. Her demeanor brightened considerably when she announced: "*Come, I will show you a picture that I like*" (I 7-2,1,32). A huge smile filled her face and her voice rose triumphantly. She showed me the image and described it as a woman activist named Rasha



(I 7) Woman Attacking a Man in a Crowd:
Egypt News Network
2013

Azab attacking Ahmed Al-Mogheer, a thug hired by the Muslim Brotherhood ("Egyptian Prosecutors…" 2013) She grinned as she told me the story, and her voice rose until she was yelling: "*A woman* walahi *(I swear), a woman!*"

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Nader showed me an image that had been altered digitally to place President Morsi's head on the body of a particularly muscular shirtless soldier (N 5-2,1,25). Nader, who was a defender of the former president's legitimacy, could not seem to keep a straight face when looking at it. As he explained that the image showed how Egyptians felt their president was strong, he was very clearly wearing a large, genuine smile.

Tamer laughed heartily while considering Cala's image of a young boy holding an Al Ahly flag (C 8-2,2,37). His smile disappeared, however, when I informed him that this boy was Anas Mohly, a young man who had died during the Port Said Incident. His eyes widened with recognition: "*Yeah!*" He then said: "*Feeling sorry* tab3n *(of course)*" so quietly that I needed to ask him to repeat himself. Tamer's solemn sympathy was another common element of connecting, as were gasps, teary eyes, distress, frowns, and long, dramatic pauses.

When I presented a famous image of the "Camel Battle," Mary cried out suddenly and covered her face (C 6-2,2,11). She responded in a similar way to an image of the "Blue Bra Woman" (B 1-2,2,28). Iman showed me an image of people waiting at the Cairo train station after the Port Said Incident to see if their sons had survived the brutal after-match violence. Her eyes filled with tears as she explained that the people killed in that event were very young (I 4-2,1,22).

In these examples, we can see MacDougall's (2005:23) ideas at work. These examples are of participants that were embracing these images and the affective experiences they inspired. Their expressiveness with their bodies, faces, and voices were not just evidence of their affective experience of these images, but part of it. For Nader, smiling and laughing were important parts of his feeling happy, as were Tamer's solemn manners, Mary's pained exclamations, and Iman's tears.

These behaviors did not always point to participants' feelings in a straightforward fashion. Gamal chuckled when first presented with Mohamed's image of the "Blue Bra Woman" being beaten. This was puzzling, considering that he earlier described in detail how angry the image made him feel, despite having seen it many times. He had also explained that he had lost friends during arguments about the authenticity of this image. Given Gamal's eventful history with this image, I would postulate that his laughter was in the spirit of "black humor," also known as "gallows humor." This form of humor is

typified by jokes and laughter about dark and otherwise taboo ideas (Obrdlik 1942:709) (Gamliel 2003:506). Cala (C 3-2,1,12) and Mary (2,1,22) also employed this form of humor while considering things they described as unhappy.

What form of affective experience could this "black humor" be part of? Gamliel's (2003:506) article explores the use of this comedy by patients in old-age homes when coming to terms with their mortality. He suggests that black humor is more of an offensive mechanism than a defensive one, and that it is actually the extreme type of acceptance, just as repression is the extreme type of denial. Gamliel's ideas are in tune with Gamal, Cala, and Mary's laughter and humor. Black humor's emotiveness and acceptance are indicative of connecting. Rather than avoiding or attempting to discredit the unpleasant contents of the image (deflecting), these participants were embracing and coming to terms with these unpleasant things. Thus, occurrences of black humor appear to be incidences in which participants connected to the image. This conclusion is confirmed by the contexts of these examples; Gamal, Cala, and Mary continued considering the image in a manner typical of connecting.

Despite finding some of the images they connected to unpleasant, participants did not avoid them by looking away or asking to skip to the next image. On the contrary, they often increased eye contact with the image in these situations. In the example above, Mary took the image viewer from my hands and focused on it for a while, describing how these "*nice boys*" and "*lovely young men*" had been crushed under camels on this day (C 6-2,2,12). The expression on her face was a wince, as if she were enduring physical pain. Dalia had a similar expression when shown an image of the "Potato Boy" (A 3-2,2,31). She did not know who he was, so I explained that he was a potato seller who had reportedly been shot accidently during a confrontation between police and protesters about a month prior to our interview. She winced and gave a sympathetic "*aww*" and stared intently at the face on the screen in silence for several seconds.

Despite the fact that the image of the "Blue Bra Girl" upset Gamal, he connected to and accepted it with black humor. In much the same way, when participants locked their eyes on images that were unpleasant to them, they accepted these unpleasant feelings and embraced them by connecting to the image. Dalia's consideration of the "Potato Boy," for instance, is an excellent example of what Jenssen describes in her book

*Behind the Eye* (2009:144). Jenssen suggests that images of faces assert the unique individual "otherness" of the person being viewed, but also the common unity between the viewer and the viewed. This awakens feelings of responsibility in the viewer and these feelings are, as this section has suggested, felt throughout the body. However, Jenssen also points out that the viewer does not always feel this feeling; those who are unsympathetic to the viewed person's plight avoid the entire experience. Thus, Dalia, Gamal, Mary, and other participants that focused on unpleasant images were embracing these feelings of responsibility when I saw these non-verbal expressions. What remains to be explored are the facial expressions, body language, and vocal patterns of participants when they avoided these feelings or responsibility and deflected the image.

The above examples show how expressive participants were when viewing images they connected with. This stands in stark contrast to participants' behavior when deflecting an image. The emotive facial expressions, exclamations, and variations in vocal patterns disappeared and what remained can best be described as flatness; they spoke with cold passiveness, indifferent faces, and level voices. These behaviors were an element of a potent form of affective experience. This powerful discomfort or aversion, similar to disgust, often involved dedicated avoidance of feelings that would validate the world they felt was suggested by the image.

Dalia, one of the most expressive participants and an enthusiastic supporter of the anti-Mubarak protests, became suddenly bland when I presented an image of Mubarak and Sadat praying (A 1-2,2,28). While Osama, a dedicated advocate for political change in Egypt, was considering Amina's image of Cairo by night, he appeared bored and uninterested (A 2-2,1,49). I discussed Cala's image of a man with a bloody face possibly beaten by Pro-Morsi



(A 1) Mubarak and Sadat Praying: Time and Life Images
01 Nov 1979

protesters with Nader, an avid defender of President Morsi's legitimacy. Throughout our conversation, his voice was level and his face was apathetic (C 7-2,2,14).

Sometimes participants took measures to avoid the image altogether. Amina, Gamal, and Osama all attempted to cut the discussion of certain images short by switching to another image after only a few seconds. Amina, who disliked the destructive nature of the 18 Days of Protest, immediately responded to an image of Ahmed Basouni, who died during the 18 Days of Protests, by saying in Arabic "*3di,*" which means essentially "normal" or "familiar" (Z 2-2,2,7). She then clicked the keyboard to skip to the next photo. I insisted that we go back and consider the image some more, and we did. Her body language spoke of discomfort and she eventually reiterated: "*I want to skip.*"

While explaining that the train in a picture had not crashed by accident, Nader smiled intermittently, but his voice remained mostly level throughout (C 10-2,2,15). A strong supporter of Morsi, he suggested that the sudden outbreak of train accidents in Egypt was the result of *felool* (remnants of Mubarak's regime) attempting to undermine Mohammad Morsi's presidency. I observed that these were not "genuine" smiles that affect the entire face, but rather "polite" smiles, that only affect the mouth. The impression I was left with at the time was that he was addressing me as a student being informed and wanted to be pleasant and reasonable while he discredited the image.

MacDougall's ideas (2005:23) are at work here as well. He suggested that bodily and vocal expressiveness were not just evidence of feeling but rather an important part of it. The cold passiveness, apathetic faces, and flat voices described here were essential aspects of feelings of discomfort, aversion, apathy, denial, or avoidance. These are all typical of the deflecting form of affective experience. Gaines (1999:90) points out that images suggest worlds, and these worlds inspire movement in the bodies of viewers, which is affect. But in these cases, these images are inspiring a profound lack of movement, a determined silence, and a stoic apathy. Thus, the act of deflecting involves avoidance of movements/affect that would legitimize the images they are viewing. This is the essential defining element of deflecting that I continue to explore in the remainder of this chapter.

There are of course outliers concerning this theme, and with consideration they are extremely informative. While participants were noticeably more stoic while

discussing images they were deflecting, some became emphatic at a certain point in their consideration. This trend appeared exclusively amongst those who were insisting that certain narratives about the image were false. Once they rejected those narratives, they considered other narratives distantly related to the image. While considering these other narratives, they became expressive with their bodies, faces, and voices.

Gamal, a defender of Morsi's legitimacy as president, considered an image of Hamada Saber, a man who was reportedly beaten by police and stripped of his clothing. There was first a long pause while he stroked his chin thoughtfully (B 3-2,3,11). He then presented me with his doubts about the credibility of popular interpretations of the event in the flat, stoic manner I described above. However, his voice suddenly rose as he said: "*Okay, first, this one, who send this, he don't like Morsi, I'm sure.*" He laughed after saying this and his following rhetorical questions about Hamada's suspicious behavior in the hospital were emphatic and forceful.

Haisam, who considered the latter half of the 18 Days of Protest to be needlessly destructive, behaved similarly when he considered image he had taken of people who had died during these demonstrations (H 3-2,3,10). His voice was level and his body language was muted as he explained why he was skeptical about whether or not these people actually died in the Square. This changed however when he began to describe how he thought most of them had died attacking the Ministry of Interior. His voice began to rise and fall more dramatically and he spoke faster and faster. He began asking rhetorical questions and using his hands to emphasize his points.

While Nader and Haisam's considerations are definitely exceptions, they add rather than detract from the purpose of this section. In both examples, they were bland and unexpressive during the initial consideration of the image, and only began to be expressive when they were considering narratives distantly related to the image. Saber's behavior in the hospital does not directly consider events in the image, but rather something Saber did later on in a different place. The protesters' attack on the Ministry of Interior is just as distantly related; Haisam was not referring to the behavior of any of those people in the image, but rather speaking of the protesters in general. They were both unexpressive at first, but became expressive once they found a related issue to discuss that matched their subjectivity.

As I described in chapter two, narratives informed participants' interpretation of images, and these interpretations suggested worlds. In these two situations, Nader and Haisam were rejecting and discrediting the narratives that they knew about the image. As a result of what they could see in the image and the narratives they associated with it, they were unable to create an initial interpretation that matched their subjectivity. The only meanings they were able to find for the image suggested worlds that clashed with the worlds they were invested in promoting. Thus, they deflected the meaning they had found and avoided discussing their experience of it. However, once they found other narratives distantly related to the image, they cast off their indifference in favor of the passionate expressiveness typical of connecting. It would seem that, by means of the new narratives that they remembered, they reinterpreted the image to suggest a world they could connect to. However, another possibility should be mentioned. Since these new narratives were so distantly related, were they reinterpreting the image in order to connect, or were they setting it aside and connecting to the narratives alone?[7] The line between these two is somewhat grey, but, as I will demonstrate in the next section, attempting to set the image aside and move on was typical of deflecting.

## 2. Descriptions of Experience

One of the most distinct differences between connecting and deflecting was the participants' description of their experience of the image, or the lack thereof. Connecting descriptions of experience were varied and expressive. Participants described their experience explicitly, used hypothetical "If I were there" situations, or reported physical pain. They also sometimes expressed themselves in clear characterizations concerning their beliefs about what they saw in the image. The most straightforward trend when participants were describing experiences was simply reporting how they felt about the image they were considering. This trend was so prevalent that every single participant did it at some point.

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[7] I have here suggested the possibility that one can connect or deflect a narrative that is not necessarily associated with an image. The understanding that narratives inform interpretation and lead to affective experience could be applied to the consideration of things besides imagery, for instance, narratives themselves. Of course, this is well beyond the scope of this thesis to pursue here.

Eyad submitted images that he interpreted as showing that events in Tahrir Square were organized and secure. He reported that when he saw these images, such as one of a protester wearing an orange vest, he felt "*more secure*" and that Egypt was "*in the right track*" (E 4-2,1,14). Dalia presented me with a photo of a martyr memorial she saw while she was participating in protests in Tahrir Square (D 3-2,1,70). She explained that she was happy these people were in heaven. She reported: "*It makes you sad*" but "*they didn't die in vain. That is really important to me personally.*"

Gamal was especially expressive about his experience of a video of the "Blue Bra Woman" (Gv2-2,2,11). He explained: "*You still have the same feeling directly. It's come directly very, very strong and you feeling something wrong.*" He went on to say that what made him even angrier was the people who



(B 1) An Image of the Blue Bra Woman: El-Fares Boda/Reauters
17 Dec. 2011

blamed the girl for what happened. Some of his friends were of this persuasion and he described how he was "*very hard on this people.*" He described this anger, "*You know when you feeling the blood pressure it's going in your head directly?*" and later "*I feeling I will explode.*" Later in the interview, he considered an image taken from this video (B 1-2,3,17). His initial reaction was to chuckle,[8] after which I asked: "*You know this?*" He responded: "*Course. Make me mad.*"

Describing how they felt was similar in effect to the bodily expressiveness described earlier. Their descriptions of their affective experience of the image were part of their affective experience. I am not suggesting a case of circular causality in which describing affect is the only way to experience affect. Instead, I have found that discussion of affect is one of many ways of expressing feeling. As MacDougall (2005:23) and Jenssen (2009:144) have shown us, the expression of feeling is not just a report of an internal process, but rather an important aspect contributing to the continuation of the

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[8] This was most likely an instance of "black humor."

affective experience they have described. This is very much similar to how participants' physical expressions were part of their affective experience. However, in those situations I was observing the effect that their experience of the image had on their body; here they are observing themselves and reporting their experiences.

A few participants described experiencing physical pain upon viewing images of violence. Amina's discussion of an image of the deceased Mohammed el Guidi considered both his violent, unfair death and the plight of his "*typical Egyptian*" mother (Z 5-2,2,20). El Guidi was believed by many, including Amina, to have been captured, interrogated, and tortured to death by police according to the bidding of the Muslim Brotherhood. "*It really makes your body... feel kind of... ill.*" She struggled to express the feeling to her satisfaction. "*You are not comfortable like your heart is kind of sick.*" Similarly, Dalia, an enthusiastic attendee of the 18 Days of Protest, submitted the famous image of post-mortem Khalid Said's deformed face. Though she had seen the image many times, upon first showing it to me, she gasped and said: "*It hurts*" (D 1-2,1,50). Mary, who was deeply concerned for the plight of the Coptic minority in Egypt, presented an image of Copts carrying the coffins of several Revolutionary martyrs. She explained: "*But the one that breaks really my heart is this one. Carrying all those nice little boys. Taking them to bury them. It hurts me*" (M 3-2,2,9).

Their descriptions are indicative of the "political mimesis" that Gaines (1999:90) examined. The bodies of these participants were mimicking what they saw in the image in a form of empathetic pain. Jenssen (2009:144) also suggested that people do not just see images with their eyes, but rather with their entire body by feeling. This is akin to the effect of images on participants' bodies that I observed in the "Bodies, Faces, and Voices" section, only here the participants are reporting the effects that they perceive to be within their bodies.

Another small but notable trend amongst participants connecting to images was to put themselves in a hypothetical situation associated with the image and say what they would do. Iman, who began to question her allegiance to SCAF due to their harsh treatment of protesters, considered an image of a policeman who purposely shot protesters in the eyes during protests against SCAF. She reported that she was "*very angry about it*" and "*If I saw him I would kill him in the street*" (I 2-2,1,10). Mary joked:

"*They need to be spanked these guys*" when discussing the behavior of the police involved in the "Blue Bra Woman" incident (B 1-2,2,28). Haisam's discussion of deceased from the 18 Days of Protest became a description of the protesters' assault on the Ministry of Interior (H 13-2,3,10). He defended the actions of police protecting the integrity of Egypt's national system, saying: "*And if I were in [the police officers'] place, I would attack them.*"

This means of expression is an interesting way to express a unique kind of affective experience. Iman, Mary, and Haisam put their bodies into the images they were considering. They saw with their entire bodies, as Jenssen (2009:144) describes, and felt so strongly that they desired to put themselves into the image and interact with it. This feeling is also somewhat indicative of Gaines' (1999:90) political mimesis. Their bodies aren't necessarily mimicking the pain they perceive someone in the image feeling; however, they are describing a desire to participate in the events they perceive in the image in a different way. In all three examples above the participants are expressing a strong desire to inflict pain on the people depicted in the image.

The likely root of this desire was moral attitudes of fairness (Jasper 1999:154). These participants felt that the people in the image had done something wrong and had not been adequately punished. Their frustration about this was so great, they desired to enter the image and do it themselves. Haisam's case is slightly different, as he felt that what happened to the people in the image was deserved, and wanted to enter the image to show his support for the actions of the police officers. His frustration was that so many people supported the protesters destructive behavior and condemned the police who protected the building.

Participants also used characterizations of the image or the image's narratives to describe their experiences. Mary immediately gasped when first presented with an image of the "Blue Bra Woman" (B 1-2,2,28). Her initial description of the image was peppered with characterizations such as: "*Nasty!*" "*It's a horrible image. Horrible. This is monstrous.*" "*[The police] are so cruel!*" and "*It's really-it's brutal. Brutal.*" Cala's consideration of a picture of police eating K.F.C. included such descriptions as: "*It's Irony*" and "*It's very funny; it's interesting too*" (B 6-2,2,32). Upon recognizing the "Potato Boy," who had died from a bullet wound at an anti-Morsi protest, Cala gasped

and said: "*Yes, this is a bad thing*" (A 3-2,2,25). Mohamed, who was very suspicious of Morsi at the time, considered the same image but did not know any of the narratives associated with it (A 3-2,2,12). As I presented this information to him, he characterized it by saying: "*It's horrible.*" Haisam, who was very skeptical of the Muslim Brotherhood, initially responded to an image of a bloodied protester reportedly beaten by pro-Morsi thugs by saying: "*Ah, this was a very horrible story*" (C 7-2,4,31). This expressive language was in stark contrast to his consideration of an earlier image of anti-Mubarak protesters, which he deflected. That discussion focused on the falsities of the narratives associated with the image and made no such characterizations.

The characterizations in these examples were a means of expressing and experiencing the image. Note that all these characterizations, except for Cala's, were moral in nature. "*Cruel,*" "*nasty,*" "*horrible,*" and "*bad,*" are all words used to characterize an event or action morally. Such moral consideration was indicative of a connection with the image that participants did not exhibit when deflecting. Also, participants' bodies, faces, and voices matched their characterizations. Cala laughed when she announced: "*It's funny,*" Mary winced and spoke with emphasis when she declared: "*This is monstrous,*" and Haisam was downcast as he said: "*This was a very horrible story.*" They were describing what they saw using characterizations, and as Jenssen (2009:144) explained, seeing is done with one's entire body via feeling. Thus, making this kind of characterization is another way of feeling.

In contrast to the variety of descriptions above, when deflecting an image, participants' descriptions of their experience can be summed up in one word: "Nothing." This was the answer they gave, sometimes before I even asked a question, and sometimes only after I pressed them to describe their personal experience.



I asked Eyad: "*What do you think of this picture?*" while we considered an image I presented of the "Potato Boy," who had been killed by a police officer. Eyad said:

(A 3) The Potato Boy: Lifemakers
Unknown Date.

"*Nothing… won't be the first, won't be the last*" (A 3-2,3,12). After some discussion about the location of Amina's image of Mubarak and Sadat praying, Mohamed furrowed his brow and said: "*I don't get it… I just don't understand why [the person who selected the picture] would pick it as a very, moving picture*" (A 1-2,1,38). I presented the image of night-time Cairo to Osama, an  organizer of political demonstrations. His immediate response was "*Cairo by night... Uh. No,* y3nni *(like), nothing at all. Uh. Nice photography on this*" (A 2-2,1,49). Amina, a supporter of Mubarak, and I spent considerable time discussing a picture of a man named Ahmed Basouni who had died while participating in the 18 Days of Protest (Z 2-2,2,8). Amina suggested that her lack of involvement in the 18 Days of Protest could explain why  "*I don't just have feelings* y3nni. 3di *(like, it's normal). Someone who died. May God bless his soul.*"

Jenssen (2009:144) establishes that "seeing" is an act undertaken with one's entire body by feeling. While deflecting, participants repeatedly reported that they saw or felt "Nothing." All of these instances were coupled with the indifferent bodies, faces, and voices that typify deflecting. Connecting participants put their bodies into the image by describing what they would do and how they felt about the image's contents. On the other hand, deflecting participants kept themselves outside the image by avoiding such personal discussion. The reason for this being, if there is "nothing" meaningful or valid to see in the image, then there is no reason to enter the image and "nothing" to express other than indifference.

It is also notable that while deflecting participants struggled to make characterizations even if I asked for one explicitly. I presented Haisam, who disliked the destructive nature of the 18 Days of Protest, with one of the many images of a nighttime Tahrir Square filled with the lights and thousands of people (C 1-2,4,25). When I explicitly asked: "*So what do you think of this? A good picture? A bad-*" he interrupted to say flatly "Lah *(no), it's a good picture. It's good yes.*" It was clear that he was still speaking of the quality of the actual picture, as he had been doing for some time before this exchange, so I asked again: "*Is it good that there were so many people?*" He responded: "*I tell you that twenty or twenty-five percent or fifty-percent of these people they are there in the Square, they are not involved in politics at all.*" He went on to insist

that most of the people in the Square were not there because they wanted Mubarak to leave, but rather because they wished to sightsee and be entertained.

Haisam is attempting to discredit the narrative he associates with this image. This is a means of deflecting an image that I explore in detail below. At this point, I present this example in order to show how Haisam avoided responding to my request for a moral characterization and discussed something else. Such a characterization was impossible, as there was nothing meaningful or valid to characterize in the image.

One conversation stands out from the others as an exception to this theme. Amina, who admired the former president's leadership, considered a cartoon of Khalid Said removing a tiny Mubarak (Z 3-2,2,12). For the first two minutes of our discussion, she described the impact of the image on Egypt in general, but avoided speaking about herself. When I asked: *"Yeah, so what do you think of this picture?"* she responded: "*Yeah it is um, it's cartoonic* sah *(right)? It's a drawing? So I think um…* y3nni *(like)… Powerful...* y3nni *(like).*" In this case, the ellipses stand for considerable, uncomfortable pauses. Amina made this characterization while she was, I believe, deflecting the image. Her considerable hesitation when answering coupled with the straightforward nature of my question shows how difficult it was for Amina to create this characterization while deflecting.

Amina went on to describe the effect of Khalid Said's death on Egypt and the Revolution. I then asked the same question again, but referred specifically to how she felt about Khalid Said's death before the Revolution: "*Did you see the pictures, on Facebook of him before the Revolution? What did you think?"* She responded immediately: "*Very disgusting.* Y3nni *(like) what is the Ministry of Interior doing? It's not professional.*"

Here she made a clear characterization similar to those I described earlier, but it seems that it was made possible by the fact that we were considering Said's death rather than the image itself. The image depicts Said removing Mubarak. This is symbolic for the removal of this former president by people inspired by Said's death. Amina explained multiple times that she did not approve of this removal. She also explained that she did not approve of the way that Said was treated by the police. However, she blamed this unfairness on the minister of interior rather than the former president. Thus, the image I showed her suggested a world that did not match her subjectivity because of its negative

depiction of Mubarak. The narratives we later discussed about Said's death did not necessarily suggest the same world as the image. Speaking of the image in such a way as to blame the Ministry of Interior instead of Mubarak created an interpretation of the image that suited Amina's subjectivity. As a result of this new approach, she was able to connect with the image by making a characterization.

When a world that did not suit their subjectivity was suggested by the meaning they initially create for the image, the participants responded to this initial unwelcome interpretation by deflecting it. This deflection is typified by the word "nothing," which participants used often to describe what they saw or how they felt. Jenssen (2009:144) suggests that people see with their entire body by feeling. Participants saw "nothing" because none of the meaning they found in the image was credible to them, so there was nothing for them to feel besides avoidance and indifference.

## 3. Informational Considerations

I have established that while deflecting, participants avoided describing an experience of the image. The question then becomes, if we discussed every single image and they avoided describing their experience of some, what *did* we talk about while they were deflecting? The subject of this section is one answer to that question. Deflecting participants oftentimes flatly gave information about the image or an event associated with it without including themselves in the discussion. Oftentimes the information was distantly related to the image. If I pushed an informational participant to give an opinion, they would maintain indifference by means of the word "nothing" or present an interpretation that discredited the image. I will consider the latter behavior in the next section.

A notable example of this was Amina's consideration of an image of Ahmed Basouni, a man who died during clashes between police and protesters during the 18 Days of Protest (Z 2-2,2,8). Her immediate response to the image was to say "3di *(it's normal)*" and insist that she did not feel anything. She attempted to skip the image, and in response I insisted that she wait until I had asked her a few questions about it. Her answers were short and informational, with no emotive language or discussion of what the image might mean to her. When I asked her to consider why the people who

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submitted the image might have thought it was powerful, she responded at first with variations of "*I don't know*" and then concisely reported what they might think in a mocking and dismissive manner. When I told her some of the narratives behind the image, she said: "*I can't engage in this kind of—I don't know—shared sentiment with him.*" Eventually she became frustrated with me. "*I don't know* walahi *(I swear). I have no feelings. At all. Why don't you just believe me? I don't have any reflections just reflections* 3di y3nni *(like normal). I don't know.*"

Amina's reaction to my insistence typifies what I mean by "Informational." Her immediate response was a sort of confusion, as if there were nothing there. When questioned about the image, she began reporting information about the picture and the narratives attached to it without contributing anything personal about her experience of it. When I pushed her to insert herself into the consideration, she pushed back in frustration and insisted that what I was inquiring about was not there. This situation played out in different ways during many different interviews, often in tandem with the English word "nothing."

While watching a video I presented of police chasing protesters during the 18 Days of Protest, Haisam, who supported Mubarak, was focused on discussing the gas station that he could see in the background (Gv3-3,2,1). He also considered an image of Tahrir Square filled with protesters (C 1-2,4,25). He was very informational about the days of the week when more or less people were present in the Square and spent time considering the possible nature of the skilled photographer who took the picture.

This unmoved emphasis on the reporting of information is a means to avoid describing affective experience and inserting themselves into the discussion of the image. Inserting themselves as anything more than "nothing" was unacceptable, since their initial interpretations of these images suggested a world that clashed with these participants' "cherished pieties" (Sontag 2003:11). On a few occasions, participants were informational about images that they did not show any other signs of deflecting. Osama considered an image of a newspaper filled with pictures of martyrs from the 18 Days of Protest (C 3-2,2,6). He discussed how images like this were a powerful tool for mobilization and repeatedly said: "*Martyrs play a significant role*" without really inserting himself into the conversation. However, though he focused the rest of the four

minute conversation on mobilization, he did mention that banners and posters are "*emotionally very strong for me*" after I asked specifically. I postulate that Osama was caught up in his role as an organizer of social movements and actually forgot himself. Additionally, he described having seen this particular image many times throughout the two years since it was created, so perhaps it has lost its effect for him over time.

## 4. Differing Treatment of Narratives While Connecting or Deflecting

This section considers the way that narratives were treated differently when participants were connecting or deflecting an image. Each of these images has its own "life" constantly being redefined by people discussing and reconsidering the image through the lens of their subjectivities to create interpretations (Mitchell 2005:8). When I refer to a "narrative," I am referring to other people's interpretations of the image that the participants were aware of during their consideration. Participants made use of narratives from word-of-mouth, social media, and television programs to inform their interpretations. Participants did not simply report narratives they had heard, but rather combined a number of them into one interpretation based on their experiences and foundations of understanding.

Narratives were extremely important for participants' interpretations. When faced with an image that they did not recognize and did not have narratives for, participants were unable to determine the world that they felt was suggested by the image. They were usually able to interpret images almost immediately by means of affect, but this capacity was hindered when they did not know any narratives to associate with the image. In this situation, participants focused on gathering information from what they could see in the image itself or trying to remember if they knew anything about it. The meaning that they eventually created for the image was limited and "safe." As they lacked sufficient meaning to suggest worlds and inspire feeling, the participants did not continue on to clearly connect or deflect the image in these situations.

For example, Tamer considered Cala's image of a man bleeding from the head (C 7-2,2,36). After describing it as "*an injured man*" he declined to provide further interpretation, saying: "*I will not support him* y3nni *(like). Is he trying to save his life? Or they put him to deliver it to police?... Yeah I don't know.*" He did not feel he had enough

information, so he was unable to create meaning for the image. Thus, narratives were important to participants for creating meaning for images. Since narratives were such a central element of participants' creation of interpretations, this section compares the ways that narratives were treated when connecting or deflecting.

When connecting to an image, participants often presented their interpretation by discussing narratives that they had used to create meaning for the image. The descriptions of these narratives were usually filled with animated bodies, faces, and voices as well as characterizations and descriptions of affective experience.

When Cala considered the image I presented of the "Potato Boy," she characterized it by saying: "*Yes this is a bad thing*" and then: "*If it wasn't just pure luck, no one would have known about him*" (A 3-2,2,25). She then discussed a detailed narrative of how this boy died and how his parents found out about his death through a newspaper article. Mohamed, who was very suspicious of police from his past experiences protesting, presented an image taken from a video of Hamada Saber naked in the street surrounded by police (B 3-2,1,14). According to what Mohamed had heard, Hamada was a protester who was being harassed by the police simply because he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. He explained that he watched the original video live and saw the police slap Hamada in the face as he begged to be let go. While showing me an image of the deceased Khalid Said, Dalia explained that she had heard that he was a drug addict who "*got caught in a mess with the police. And they beat him to death*" (D 1-2,1,50).

Narratives were important to participants for the creation of meaning. So it comes as no surprise that, when connecting, participants simply presented the narratives that they had used to create their interpretation. This happened so often that every participant did it multiple times; the majority of our time during interviews was spent describing, comparing, and exploring these narratives.

In addition to presenting the narratives they were using for interpretation, many participants also addressed other narratives that they had heard or that I brought up during the conversation. Oftentimes, they took it upon themselves to defend the legitimacy of their interpretation from narratives that they believed clashed with it.

Dalia and I discussed Khalid Said's post-mortem picture that she submitted (D 1-2,1,50). She said that the police who had beaten Said to death had claimed that he died from an overdose. She pointed to the picture and said sarcastically: "*Okay, clearly he overdosed. Clearly.*" She explained that her friends' had personally experienced how police often just took the drugs they caught people with rather than beating them. She accessed the "Wikipedia" article about Khalid Said and discussed which points she found believable and which she thought were unlikely. Concerning the police's claim that Khalid Said was wanted for theft and weapons possession, Dalia said: "*That's bullshit. Complete bullshit. Weapons* eh *(what)? Where was Khalid Said going to get weapons from? He's a poor Alexandrian kid.*"

Gamal reported that some of his friends had stopped speaking to him after heated disagreements over narratives concerning the "Blue Bra Woman" (Gv2-2,2,10). His friends had insisted that popular narratives about this woman's suspicious nature were well informed. Gamal said he was dedicated to defending the integrity and bravery of this young woman from these narratives. He described an argument with one of these friends, during which his friend claimed that he would never allow his sister to attend a protest in such a way. Gamal's response was: "*I told him 'Okay, but your sister go, maybe because she [is a] man more [than] you...[The Blue Bra girl] have a feeling to be proud more than you and me and everyone who sit in home.*"

Haisam's presentation of narratives associated with his image of a burnt police truck lasted for fourteen minutes (H 4-2,1,35). He explored many popular narratives of the violence between protesters and police during the 18 Days of Protest that was commonly blamed on Mubarak and the security forces. He presented his interpretation of these narratives, pointing out how Mubarak and police had been placed in impossible situations by violent and unreasonable protesters. For instance, officers in police trucks had to choose between driving through the protesters that surrounded them or being locked inside their trucks and burned alive.

Participants did not come to their interpretations of images in a vacuum. Each of these images has a "life" outside of our interviews made up of a multiplicity of viewers' considerations. Participants were often familiar with some of an images life, and therefore came into contact with several different, and oftentimes conflicting,

perspectives concerning that image. They chose the narratives that they found most trustworthy and believable (based on their subjectivity) to include in their interpretation. There often remained narratives that they did not use in their interpretation that seemed to them to clash with their perspective of the image. They often presented these narratives in order to describe why they were not believable. In these situations, it seemed that they were not just speaking to me, but also to people whose perspectives differed from theirs. Remember that participants were aware that these interviews were going to be used for a published thesis, so they could likely have felt that they were giving their perspectives for posterity in addition to being for our conversation. Also, discussing narratives that conflicted with their interpretation was also a useful means to further define their perspective of the image. They presented what their interpretation *was*, and then further described it by explaining what it was *not*.

Earlier I described how the participants often became flatly informative when deflecting an image. The participants also frequently took another interesting route to deflecting. They formed an initial interpretation of the image in the moment of viewing using narratives they associated with it and were unable to create meaning that matched their subjectivity. At this point they were faced with an image filled with meanings that they could not accept, and so they set out to undermine these meanings. They took aim at the narratives that suggested unacceptable worlds in order to discredit the image. Their discussion of the image focused on undermining these narratives, often while making use of other narratives they had heard. Unlike when they defended the legitimacy of their interpretation while connecting, the function that this served was to defend their subjectivities and establish that the narratives that suggested unacceptable worlds were somehow invalid. In many cases, this took place exactly as Sontag (2003:11) reports; participants' "cherished pieties" clashed with the narratives they associated with the image and they suggested that these narratives and the image were staged fabrications. Participants used several different approaches to discredit narratives and images.

Perhaps the most straightforward approach to this was the "Photoshop Accusation." Nader was a strong supporter of former President Morsi's legitimacy. He showed me how an image of Morsi kissing a woman had been altered using photo editing software, such as "Adobe Photoshop" (N 4-2,1,18). Since Morsi's face had been

artificially inserted into the photo, the threatening narrative Nader saw in the image, that Morsi had kissed a woman who was not his wife, was shown to be invalid. Karim, who had great faith in the Egyptian military, considered an image I presented of the "Blue Bra Woman," who was assaulted by police during the military's rule (B 1-2,2,3). His first response was: "*This one, I think this what was fake for the people.*" He also said: "*But there is… soldiers that don't have the right shoes, trying to kick her. So I think this one, it's Photoshop.*"

Karim went on to discredit this photo in additional ways. He suggested that the events in the photo were set up by Liberals to make the military look bad and "*I think this man is with her and trying to shoot [the soldiers].*" And so, in addition to discrediting the image by suggesting that elements had been added after the photo was taken, he also suggested that elements were planted during the event itself. What appears to be happening, police disrobing and beating a woman, is therefore invalidated.

Gamal, a supporter of former President Morsi's legitimacy, spoke similarly of the image I presented of anti-Morsi protester Hamada Saber surrounded by police in the street (B 3-2,3,11). He said: "*If you take this photo exactly, it's be worse, and all of these people not human* (he pointed to the police)*… But if you watch, all of… the video, you will find the people be- he make something strange.*" He went on to explain that Hamada seemed like an actor and that it was very suspicious that the hidden TV camera was placed in exactly the right place to capture this event and broadcast it live. Again, what appears to be happening in the image, the police mistreating an anti-Morsi protester, was made to look that way through trickery. Once he discredited this narrative, the credibility of the world it suggested was diminished, and the potentially moving affective experience it could have inspired was avoided.

The introduction of a third party was another means that participants used to discredit images. Nader, upon seeing Cala's image of a train that crashed during President Morsi's term, immediately began explaining how bad things like this cropped up in large amounts for short periods, then disappeared, which was suspicious (C 10-2,2,15). A dedicated defender of Morsi, he said: "*I think…Mubarak party is behind all of this. Try to make everything go to worst, so when they appear again, people can trust for them.*" Tamer's response to the same image was similar: "*All of accident was happening,*

*and suddenly it cut off… So it be… done by the* felool *or anything. Anyone want to prove that Morsi is a loser*" (C 10-2,2,32). This is similar to what Gamal and Karim did by suggesting that one group in the event were actors. However, in this case, the event was believed to be orchestrated from behind the scenes by a party who was not at first believed to be involved.

Karim's consideration of the image of the "Blue Bra Woman" characterized the parties and event represented in the image in a way that suggested the image was misrepresenting what really happened. He said: "*And the people trying to take her! Because you didn't the scene from the beginning, from the beginning they are shouting and making like that* *made an explicit gesture with his finger*, *and like that* *shook his fist* *and shouting and tell very bad words. So that's why the soldiers was very nervous. And trying to take her.*" He uses elements from the EPA spectrum to characterize the people in the image and change the meaning of the image; the active, situation-defining people in the image are now the protesters, and the soldiers are attempting to arrest them. In this manner, he was able to change the meaning from what he initially saw in the image into something suggesting a world that was less threatening to his subjectivity.

The result of this treatment of narratives was to "take the edge off" the potential affective experiences of these narratives associated with the image rather than enabling the participant to connect. I described earlier how Haisam, a staunch supporter of Mubarak, interacted with an image I presented of Tahrir Square full of people by flatly discussing population levels in the Square and the quality of the photo (C 1-2,4,25). When I asked: "*Is it good that there were so many people?*" instead of responding to my request for a characterization, he addressed the more threatening issue in my question: "-*so many people.*" The image and my question contradicted his beliefs about what really happened during the 18 Days of Protest, and he felt this immediately, while I remained oblivious and confused as to why he did not respond to the question I was asking. He explained in detail that most of the people in Tahrir Square were not there for political reasons, but rather to see the protests and entertainers who had flocked there. For Haisam, the result of this reinterpretation was that the narratives that contradicted his beliefs and that he associated with the image had been discredited. What remained was an image that indeed depicted "-*so many people*" in Tahrir Square, but they were mostly sightseers who

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came to be entertained. This suggested a world more acceptable to Haisam, in which the majority of people were not really against Mubarak.

These participants initially created an interpretation of images from what they saw in it and heard about it and the result was not acceptable to their subjectivity. Therefore, they took pains to push this interpretation away by various means. They suggested that the image should be completely discarded, presented narratives that showed events in the image were orchestrated, or reinterpreted the events of image as something different from what appeared to be happening.

It is becoming clear that meaning is a determining aspect of feeling. For this reason, it is the meanings of the image that participants often took aim at while deflecting. While connecting, narratives enabled participants to interpret the image and connect to it, becoming passionate and expressive. Here it is clear that, in other situations, the reverse is also possible. By pushing away the narratives that made up their initial interpretation, participants disarmed this potential meaning. By doing so, they were able to maintain indifference and avoid affective experiences that would have legitimized their initial, unacceptable interpretation. Below I begin to consider when and why participants choose to use narratives in these different ways.

## 5. Establishing an Interpretation Before Connecting or Deflecting

In the course of my interviews another pattern became clear. Participants consistently focused on creating an interpretation of unfamiliar images before they were willing to connect or deflect the image. In the "Hesitation to Interpret Images" section of chapter two, I described how participants hesitated, or completely refused, to form interpretations of images that they did not know any narratives for. This is a situation similar to the ones described here, only in the cases below, participants had slightly more information from narratives with which to build an interpretation. These two patterns together suggest a relationship between meaning and feeling; participants could not create the latter without first creating the former. Normally, they could feel where they stood in relation to the image almost instantly and move on to connect or deflect, but in these cases this process was hindered by incomplete information about the image.

Tamer's first words upon considering an image of a full night-time Tahrir Square were: "*What is this? The day of what? Day of Mubarak leave?*" (J 2-2,2,49). When I said I did not know, he concluded: "Lah *(no), it's about leaving.*" He insisted on saying what the image was *about* before moving on to characterize the image by saying: "*Of course, it's so nice.*"

Eyad's consideration of an image of the "Potato Boy" is also an example of this (A 3-2,3,12). He did not report that he felt "*Nothing*" about this image until after he had established that the image was of a boy who had died during a protest. Before establishing this, his consideration avoided connecting and deflecting.

Mohamed also had not heard of the "Potato Boy" (A 3-2,2,9). Before I explained some narratives to him, he said: "*I don't know who that is*" and "*I didn't know about this.*" He also asked questions about the timing of this event and contemplated the exact way that the boy might have died before characterizing the image by saying: "*It's horrible.*"

Karim began his consideration of Amina's infamous image of night-time Cairo by asking: "*This is from TV?*" (A 2-2,2,11). I said: "*No.*" He said: "*This Egypt. I means from Egypt… It means for me, the beautiful Egypt.*" He first determines what the image *means*. After doing so, he moved on to describe how much he loved the Nile River and his country.

Note how I indicated that participants behaved this way while considering "unfamiliar images." When participants immediately recognized a familiar image, they showed signs of connecting or deflecting almost immediately, as they were equipped to form an interpretation this quickly. For instance, Gamal considered an image of the "Blue Bra Woman" that he had already indicated was an image that he was very familiar with and opinionated about (B 1-2,3,17). His first words upon seeing the image were: "*This one. Course. Make me mad.*" He went on to give a very emphatic interpretation of the image and discuss his frustration with various narratives.

An exception to this was Mary's consideration of the burnt remains of a building (H 7-2,2,18). She said she could see the burning from her house and characterized the image as: "*Terrible. Destruction. Cruel.*" Her voice was morose and low. When I asked her what building it was, she was aware of its location in Tahrir, but not its function or

the reason it was attacked. It is clear from her immediate expressiveness and characterizations that she was connecting to this image at this point. I told her that it was the N.D.P. building, headquarters for the National Democratic Party to which Mubarak belonged, and she suddenly leaned back and held up her hands, smiling and saying: "*It was Muslim Brotherhood!*" This surprised response shows that she truly had not realized the identity of this building, and had connected to it without knowing much about it.

Certain parts of Mary's subjectivity may have facilitated this. For one, she speaks of personally witnessing the burning of the building. For another, her subjectivity put her in a position to speak ill of all violence, so she could connect to this image of evidence of violence without contradicting her beliefs. Finally, as I said earlier, if participants were already familiar with the image, they often produced affective experience before or during their interpretation. Though she did not know which building was burnt and she did not recognize the picture, she already knew how she felt about burnt buildings because of her personal experiences with them.

These examples show that participants felt the need to situate the image in relation to their subjectivity before they described their affective experience, characterized the image or showed other signs of connecting. As MacDougall (2005:23) suggested, describing this affective experience is essentially the act of *experiencing* affective experience. Therefore, participants' were unable to feel until they had determined what the image meant via interpretation.

It may seem that participants did this because, subconsciously or consciously, they did not want to feel the "wrong way" about something; without knowing the story behind the image, they might unknowingly connect to an image whose "real" meaning was against them. Based on what I have established, I would like to suggest a different idea: when considering an image, *meaning is a requirement for feeling*. These interpretations of images suggest worlds, and Gaines (1999:90) showed that pertinent worlds are an essential aspect for inspiring political mimesis. Without first figuring out an interpretation, people are not inspired to action. Thus, participants needed to devise a meaning for the image before they felt about it.

## 6. Interpreting to Match Subjectivities

It is clear that participants connected with images that matched their subjectivity (Nepstad and Smith 2001:158) (Jenssen 2009:144). Each participant could interpret the same image differently, suggesting different worlds (Gaines 1999:90) (Ginsburg 1995:64). These interpretations are informed by narratives that participants have heard as well as personal experiences, beliefs and loyalties. All these ideas suggest that interpretation is an essential part of connecting; meaning is essential for feeling. Participants connected to images that matched their subjectivities, but these images only matched their subjectivities because they interpreted them as such.

A good way to illustrate this is with examples of participants who initially remained flat and informational, deflecting the image, but eventually created a new interpretation that suggested a world they were able to connect with. For instance, Amina, who admired the former president, was initially put off by a drawing of Khalid Said picking up a tiny, distressed Mubarak (Z 3-2,2,12). She became very informational about the causes of the Revolution and how this image was "*powerful*" for other people. However, when the discussion shifted from the fall of Mubarak to post-mortem images of Khalid Said (which we were not actually viewing), she characterized the behavior of the police as "*very disgusting.*" Her voice and body language became much more animated, and she began describing her frustrations with the Ministry of Interior. "*You are not guaranteeing human dignity. … It was…a façade of many façades of corruption in Egypt.*"

She could not connect with the world suggested by her initial interpretation of the image. However, she could connect with the world suggested by the post-mortem images, as she interpreted the guilty party to be the Ministry of Interior, not Mubarak. This interpretation matched her subjectivity, so she was able to connect with it.

Mary, who did not admire the former president, acted similarly when considering an image of Mubarak and Sadat praying (A 1-2,2,19). She was initially extremely informational, like Amina above. She focused on trying to identify the people in the background and did not discuss what the image might mean. When I asked what she thought of the image, she said: "*It's a lovely one.*" I asked: "*Why, what makes it lovely?*" She then described Sadat as "*a very pragmatic man*" and explained that the Camp David

Treaty was a good example of how Sadat helped Egypt by being pragmatic. Mary, who never expressed any fondness for Mubarak, was able to create a new interpretation that worked for her. She focused on Sadat, a figure she appreciated, and this interpretation enabled her to call the image "*lovely.*" The world this interpretation suggested, that of Sadat's positive contribution to Egypt, matched her subjectivity, as the well-being of her birthplace was extremely important to her and she believed that Sadat contributed to it.

A strong trend in these considerations of images was that participants' interpretations gravitated towards connecting. This makes sense considering that interpretations are informed by beliefs, loyalties, and memories of experiences, which are parts of a person's subjectivity. Therefore, if interpretations are based on subjectivities and connecting takes place when interpretations match subjectivities, the result is that connecting will take place more often than not.

I do not believe I can provide a quantitative breakdown of how many images were connected to and how many were deflected. By now, it should be clear that many participants both connected and deflected at some point during their consideration of one image. Additionally, this data would be biased, because, as I discussed in the introduction, my selection of participants and images was not a sample representative of all sides, and was not meant to be. However, I present an argument for this point based on examples of different participants interpreting the same image in a way that matches their subjectivity best. I have already shown this to some extent at the beginning of chapter two when I compared different interpretations of the same image, so here I briefly describe a few examples with this new emphasis.

Cala presented me with an image of a mangled train car (C 10-2,1,49). The picture was taken aiming down the tracks. A train car in the center is clearly tilted to the left and no longer correctly atop the rails. Another large metal object can be seen just ahead of the train car,

A Crashed Train: Unknown Source
17 November 2012

but it is too thoroughly smashed to be positively identified. Even further down the tracks, the very top of a crane is visible. In the foreground and to the right of the wreckage, two men are walking across the image, and one more man is leaning against the side of the train car.

When Cala showed me this image, she described it as: "*The Assuit train running over a school bus.*" She then gave the image a meaning by saying: "*This is again, Morsi not doing anything.*" She described the various things Morsi failed to do after this crash, though she said that Morsi was not driving the train and could not necessarily have prevented the accident. She became very emphatic, banging her hand on the table as she said: "*And nothing, nothing, nothing, it's still nothing since the Revolution till now no one does anything.*" Cala is a Copt and a mother whose distrust of Morsi built up slowly as she saw him repeatedly fail to take care of all people in Egypt equally (1,2,2). He instead looked out for his group's interests and neglected the rest of the country. She interpreted this image to mean that Morsi showed little regard for the tragic deaths of Egyptians that were not Muslim Brotherhood, which matches her subjectivity.

George interpreted this image by saying: "*It shows basically Morsi's negligence for the infrastructure of Egypt…and this led to the destruction of the train and the loss of lives*" (C 10-2,1,61). He said that he had heard that the tracks were uneven because the minister of transportation and Muslim Brotherhood neglected the upkeep of Egypt's transportation systems. George, a Copt, believed strongly that the Muslim Brotherhood and Morsi were extremely inept and incapable of benefiting Egypt. His emphasis throughout our conversations was that Morsi was unfit to be president and the Muslim Brotherhood was dedicated to its own goals, not the betterment of Egypt (1,2,14). George's subjectivity was very similar to Cala's, but distinct in that he focused more on the Muslim Brotherhood's inept nature than their discrimination. Their interpretations were also nearly alike, but George blames them for the accident itself, while Cala focuses on their response. Also, for whatever reason, George's interpretation did not include a school bus in the accident.

Osama immediately presented his own meaning for this image: "*Train accidents was a running theme-reoccurring thing of Mubarak's days. To me, it's all about neglect and corruption*" (C 10-2,1,51). He described how he was depressed for days following a

train accident that hit a bus full of children during Mubarak's time. He also told of a train accident that year that made him angry at Morsi. He said that a result of the Revolution was supposed to be that leaders were held accountable for the bad things that happened so they were motivated to prevent such things from happening. Osama was very active in facilitating political movements in Egypt long before the Egyptian Revolution. He emphasized the injustice and unfairness of Mubarak and Morsi's regimes (1,2,5). His interpretation matches his subjectivity; the image is "*about neglect and corruption*" the ideas he spent decades fighting against.

These examples, and those I examined in the "Comparing Interpretations" section of chapter two, show the variety of different interpretations that could be created about the same image. Each participant's interpretation was informed by their subjectivity, and the resulting meaning that they created for the image suggested a world that was acceptable to this subjectivity. Since both the goal (an acceptable world) and the means (interpretation) are based on the interpreter's subjectivity, the result was a "gravitational" affect towards connecting. Since this is the case, how and why did participants even manage to deflect images? This is the result of what I have dubbed the "Undeniable Voice of the Image," which will be considered in detail below.

## 7. Deflecting Images and Their Worlds

I have argued that deflecting participants created an initial interpretation of an image before they deflected it. The participants' creation of meaning was informed by their personal experiences, what they could see in the image, and narratives they had heard about the image. This means that, in order to create that initial interpretation, participants had to be informed by narratives that suggested worlds that clashed with their subjectivity. In the moment of viewing, they recalled these narratives and applied them to their interpretation. For the instant that it took for them to form an interpretation (Slovic 2004:311), they felt a perspective that contradicted their "cherished pieties" (Sontag 2003:11). The shock of this moment inhabiting a perspective that they disagreed with is part of the cause for their strong discomfort with the image and the narratives they considered.

Nader considered the same image of a train crash that I discussed above. He immediately began to discredit the image: "*This is the train accident that- in every period after the Revolution, every period, you will see some problem in Egypt*" (C 10-2,2,15). He went on to describe how suspicious it was that certain issues plagued Egypt for only a certain period, after which they stopped abruptly in favor of some other problem. He suggested that this meant that *felool* (remnants of Mubarak's regime) were working to "*try to make everything go to worst, so when they appears again, people can trust for them.*"

Nader was a strong supporter of Morsi's legitimacy and focused on the 18 Days of Protest as an example of how a Revolution should be. He believed that Morsi was doing his best for the country, but was held back by other political groups who wanted things their way (1,2,4). Though Nader never explicitly explained what meanings he saw in this image, it is clear that he associated certain narratives with this image that said Morsi was to blame for the crash. He discredited these narratives by asserting that someone else was to blame.

Gamal considered an image of Hamada Saber naked in a street surrounded by police (B 3-2,3,11). His immediate words were: "*For me, the biggest lie in this time.*" He went on to say: "*When the media make something to this guy, to make problem to the government and the president and everything like this.*" His first response was to address the narratives he associated with the image. He also pointed out why the world suggested by these narratives was unacceptable to him; they were used to make trouble for the government and Morsi. He said that this image had narratives that suggested that Morsi was bad and his police were inhuman. He went on to describe how Hamada seemed like an actor and the hidden camera seemed to be placed suspiciously well, as if this had been a planned event.

Gamal believed that the president he voted for should finish his four year term in office and that he should be given his "*complete chance*" to help Egypt (1,3,18). He emphasized that he did not care about who Morsi worked for, but rather whether or not Morsi could benefit Egypt. He believed that the people who wanted to ignore the fact that Morsi was voted into the presidency fairly and remove him would destabilize the country. When Gamal said that this image was used to make trouble for Morsi, he pointed out that

this image was used to depict Morsi in a negative light. Gamal deflects this world where Morsi is a bad person by asserting that the image is not what it seems to be.

Amina's consideration of an image of a man who died during the 18 Days of Protest avoided meaning altogether, focusing instead on being informational and attempting to skip the image (Z 2-2,2,7). She was able to identify the man as Ahmed Basouni, who died during clashes between police and protesters. She asked repeatedly why this image had been selected, since the man depicted was "*not really famous.*" She then speculated: "*Maybe he is like this kind of a pure, you know, devoted people. In the sake of freedom.*" The last phrase was, at the time, clearly sarcasm. When I asked her opinion, she repeatedly insisted: "*I don't feel anything*" and "*I don't know* walahi *(I swear). I have no feelings.*" She described the image as: "*Someone who died. May God bless his soul.*"

Amina considered the protesters from the 18 Days of Protest to be "*enchanted*" and not thinking clearly about the repercussions of their actions. She was very positive about Mubarak and the better days that Cairo experienced while he was president and very negative about the protests that she saw as destroying her country. She conceded that Mubarak was not perfect "*but we need to stop this shit*" (1,1,21). Ahmed Basouni, considered by popular narratives to be a martyr in the struggle to remove Mubarak from office, clearly suggested a world that was not acceptable to her subjectivity. She did not say what world she felt was suggested, and I can only guess that I had to do with the morality of Mubarak. When I told her that this man was shot because he had a camera, she said: "*So you shouldn't go with a camera.*" All this suggests that she found the world suggested by narratives about this image to be unacceptable, and she deflected this image with avoidance.

To make use of Gaines (1999:90) once more, it is the worlds suggested by participants' interpretations of images that inspired them to feel. If their initial interpretation of the image suggested a world that contradicted their perspective, they often focused on discrediting these hostile narratives and the world they suggested. For instance, when Gamal rejected the narrative that tells of Hamada Saber being stripped and beaten by police, he was also rejecting the larger world he felt was suggested by that narrative: that Morsi would allow that to happen.

## 8. The Undeniable Voice of the Image

One question remains to be answered: if the meaning of the image is subjective, why did participants not simply interpret all images in such a way that they could connect with them? For instance, Haisam could have insisted that the deceased from the 18 Days of Protest were actually Pro-Mubarak protesters, and then connected to the image with grief for his fallen comrades. Could the participants not have chosen to see whatever they wanted to see, regardless of what they saw or the narratives they had heard concerning the image?

Images about the Egyptian Revolution are part of a "collective memory" of the events they depict (Zelizer 1998:6). Collective memory is not a means for the retrieval of objective facts, but rather it reconfigures the past to fit the needs of the present. It fluctuates and redefines itself as the needs of the people remembering change. However, the term "collective memory" implies a community of people remembering something together; Zelizer calls this a "memory community." The memories of this community are plural and often conflicting and the relationship between memories of events and images is quite arbitrary. However, there are a finite number of versions of a particular event attached to a particular image at a particular time.

This is where moral attitudes of fairness, reasonability, and truthfulness become a factor. There are consequences for breaking moral principles of fairness, and these could have motivated participants to avoid unreasonable interpretations. Creating interpretations so far from the narratives accepted by the "memory community" could alienate one from others. However, as Elster (1999:145) suggested, social consequences are not the only reasons people follow morals. People also do so because doing otherwise feels bad; disapproving of one's own actions leads to shame. If a participant created an interpretation based on invented information during our interviews, I would not have persecuted them, but they could have experienced shame anyway.

Even more importantly, in order for Haisam to connect to that image of the deceased from the 18 Days of Protest, he would not only need to lie to me and others; he would need to lie to himself *and believe it*. Participants believed the narratives they had heard about images to a certain extent, accepting them into their subjectivity simply because they did not feel they could deny them. Haisam believed that the police really did

clash with protesters on the *Qasr al Nil* Bridge on the 28th of January (C 2-2,4,28). Gamal believed that the "Potato Boy" really was shot (N 3-2,3,6) and that Hamada Saber really was naked in the street surrounded by police on live television (2,3,11). Amina believed that Mubarak really was removed from office and Khalid Said's death really did play and important part in it (2,2,11). Therefore, in order to connect to an image, participants needed an interpretation that suggested an acceptable world and was believable, not just to others but also to themselves.

These limited narratives that participants did not feel they could deny created a voice for the images that was undeniable. As Mitchell (2005:8) and Pink (2001:82) explained, images are given life by a multitude of interpretations and re-considerations, and participants, when they are aware of this life, cannot completely ignore it. Moral attitudes of fairness hold them in check and prevent them from interpreting the image however they please. However, even if a person was willing to stretch morality, they can only go as far as they personally find believable. If they cannot believe the interpretation, then they cannot connect to it, and the whole exercise is rendered moot.

If viewers of images create the image's meaning, but the voice of the image prevents them from taking too many liberties with their interpretation, then the result is some images that suggest worlds the viewer does not agree with. What choice remains? Participants could choose to take up arms against the image and the meaning that they found in it. Becoming informational avoided validating the world that the participant saw as being suggested by the image. Attempting to discredit narratives takes aim at the narratives associated with the image in order to undermine the unacceptable meaning and the world the meaning suggests. Participants fell into this deflecting behavior because they found the world of the images' narratives unacceptable, but the voice these narratives gave the image undeniable.

# Chapter V- Conclusion

## 1. Summary of Findings

This thesis has focused on the lives of images and their viewers. Mitchell (2005:8), Pink (2001:82), and Sontag (2003:38) suggested that images have a "life" defined by a multitude of different interpretations and informed by a multitude of different perspectives. The eyes of different viewers perceive different worlds in an image due to their different subjectivities (Ginsburg 1995:64). A result of these unique perspectives of images is unique affective experiences concerning the images.

I sought to explore this relationship between subjectivity and affective experience in the context of the Egyptian Revolution. The images from this period of political and social change were well-circulated and opinions about them varied widely. Additionally, the people of Egypt were heavily invested in the outcome of the Revolution and, by extension, the interpretation of images associated with it.

In order to accomplish this, I made use of the "photo elicitation" method, as redefined by Harper (2002:13). I collaborated with fourteen participants to explore how each of them, with their different understandings of reality, saw something different in these images and felt differently about them. This was a unique application of photo elicitation; I applied this method to the context of a social movement and enlisted participants to select and consider the famous images from this period of change.

This two part interview process involved conversations about the participants and about the images they selected. The first part involved a conversation with participants about who they were: their way-of-life, religious beliefs, basic histories, education, and family members. We discussed their memories of what they considered to be important events in the Egyptian Revolution. They described their perspective of these events, what they found believable, who they felt solidarity with, and what they had personally witnessed. Though these conversations could not give me a complete understanding of these people's identities, they did create a small window into their world and provide

enough insight into their subjectivity to gain an understanding of their point-of-view and stake in the Revolution.

The second part of my time with participants involved considerations of images that they selected to contribute to the project. I tasked them with finding the most powerful and meaningful images to them personally. We then discussed what the images depicted and what made them meaningful to the participant. I also presented images that had been submitted previously, and we discussed these in the same manner.

The result of these conversations was a clear pattern of participants' considerations of images matching their subjectivity. They accepted and were emotive concerning images that they saw as supporting their perspective of the world. They rejected and were dismissive of images that they saw as contradicting this perspective.

The path to understanding this behavior began with considering participants' use of interpretation. While images have authors who "take" them, this does not mean that the author determines what the image means (Mitchell 2005:8). The meaning of an image is created in the subjective perspective of the viewer (Pink 2001:82). Participants created the meanings for the images they interacted with during our conversations. I found that when I presented the same image to multiple participants, they each created a unique meaning for it.

Their guide in the creation of this meaning was their subjectivity, specifically narratives that they knew from personal experience, had heard from others, or had gathered from the media. I found that it was very important to them that they have knowledge of narratives concerning an image before they formed an interpretation. Gaines (1999:90) shed light on this by suggesting that what truly inspires movement in an image's audience is the world suggested by the image. The image must be linked to narratives that suggest a world pertinent to the viewers in order to inspire feeling. In most circumstances, participants recalled narratives and picked from amongst them to create the interpretation most suitable to their subjectivity almost instantaneously. This meaning then suggested a world, which either confirmed their subjectivity or contradicted it. In the former situation, they connected to the image; in the latter situation, they deflected it.

In order to understand what made a world suggested by an interpretation of an image acceptable or unacceptable to participants, I explored participants' subjectivities in

a deeper fashion by considering their political, economic, historic, and cultural context. I discussed the different types of investment, or "stakes," that participants had in the outcome of political and social change in Egypt. People cared about the Revolution because its results could cost or benefit them directly, because they had moral attitudes of fairness that favored certain results, and because they felt they belonged to a group affected by the results. The latter type was significantly affected by their participation in activities with the group, such as protests. These stakes, and the details of each participant's situation, were essential elements of their subjectivities, which were open to social experiences.

As a result of these important aspects of their subjectivity, participants were motivated to take part in a "battle of meaning" concerning the images we considered. They sought to promote worlds suggested in images that matched their subjectivity and discredit those worlds that did not. They were aware that the promotion of certain worlds could affect the real world by influencing the perspectives of others. People and groups seek to legitimize their perspective and promote worlds that they have a stake in. This generates "battles of meaning" between opposing perspectives.

I explored the two distinct forms of interaction with these images that the participants used. The first, which I called "connecting," involved emotiveness in their bodies, faces, and voices. They were expressive about their affective experience in a variety of colorful ways. The second form of interaction, which I dubbed "deflecting," involved an absence of emotive behavior and a strong indifference. This occurred when the participants' initial interpretation of the image was unacceptable to them. In these situations they avoided discussing their affective experiences or inserting themselves into the consideration of the image. Oftentimes, they used the word "nothing" to describe what they saw or felt. They did this in order to avoid affective experiences that might validate the image they are considering.

There was also a distinct difference between how connecting and deflecting participants treated narratives they associated with the image. When connecting, participants reported the narratives that contributed to their interpretation of the image and defended their perspective of the image from other narratives they had heard. When deflecting, they often sought to discredit the image by taking aim at the narratives they

associated with it, as these meanings suggested a world that clashed with their subjectivity. These findings are similar to what Sontag (2003:11) suggested. She found that people rejected images that clashed with the viewer's "cherished pieties," often by claiming that the images were staged fabrications.

I found that meaning was a necessary element for feeling. The process of creating an initial interpretation, which was usually almost instant, was hindered and drawn out when they lacked narratives to inform their creation of meaning. Participants in this situation did not go on to connect to or deflect the image until they found the means to create an interpretation. Since participants created this meaning, they were more likely to create a meaning for the image that matched their subjectivity. However, if what they saw in the image and what they had heard about the image suggested a world that contradicted their subjectivity, they could not completely ignore these. To do so would most likely be contrary to their moral attitudes of fairness and, in order to connect to the image in this fashion, they would need to believe their own invention. Thus, what participants saw in the image and heard about the image created a voice for the image that was, to a certain extent, undeniable. The "life" of the image that Mitchell (2005:8) described was not just contributed to by participants; it had an impact on their interactions with the image.

The conversations at the center of this thesis involving images and their viewers showed that meaning is central to affective experience. This thesis found that affective experience is intimately related to the viewer's subjectivity, which informs their creation of meaning along with what they can see and what they have heard. Uncovering this process of seeing and feeling accomplishes the primary goal of this thesis: to show the intimate nature of the relationship between subjectivity and affective experience.

## 2. Final Thoughts

This thesis has achieved its goal by establishing the nature of the intimate relationship between subjectivity and affective experience when considering images. This relationship is expressed in the interpretation of images. Participants interpreted images based on their subjectivity to create certain meanings, which were required for certain affective experiences. To come to a deeper understanding of the repercussions of this

understanding, some final questions about viewing of images need to be answered. When does interpretation take place in relation to feeling? Do viewers enter into a lengthy cognitive interpretation of the image and its narratives? And upon completing this cognition, do they then decide if they will connect or deflect the image? This is certainly not the arrangement that the considerations by the participants suggested during our conversations. Their interpretation and determination to connect or deflect the image was made almost instantly. Most of the examples of connecting and deflecting in chapter three illustrated this trait. Mary suddenly cried out and covered her face the instant that I showed her an image of the violence of the "Camel Battle" (C 6-2,2,11). Gamal's consideration of an image of the "Blue Bra Woman" being beaten was immediate as well; he chuckled and said: "*This one. Course. Make me mad*" (B 1-2,3,17).

Deflecting participants began their indifference immediately of course, but more convincingly several began the task of discrediting the image in this fashion. Upon considering an image of a crashed train, Nader began a five-minute explanation of why he was suspicious of train crashes during Morsi's presidency. He did this so suddenly and continuously that I did not have time to speak throughout his consideration of the image (C 10-2,2,15). Haisam spoke instantly when I presented an image of the *al Masry Yum* newspaper filled with pictures of people who died during the 18 Days of Protest. He pointed to one picture and said: "*This is the girl that she died in her home,*" and then pointed to another: "*I think he's from the Muslim Brotherhood;*" thus he began discrediting this image immediately (2,4,30). Other such deflecting considerations took longer to begin as the participant gathered their thoughts. For instance, Gamal stroked his chin for several seconds before discussing why the image of Hamada Saber surrounded by police was not what it seemed (B 3-2,3,11). However, it was almost always clear that participants had already determined that they were deflecting the image, as evidenced by their flat and apathetic bodies, faces, and voices.

In situations where participants lacked narratives to form an interpretation, it is true that their affective experience was notably absent. For instance, Karim struggled to find meaning or feelings concerning an image of Cairo by Night (A 2-2,2,11), and Mohamed knew nothing of the "Potato Boy," and thus was flat while he questioned me about the image (A 3-2,2,9). However, in both these cases, once Karim and Mohamed

had enough information to create an interpretation, the deed was done in what seemed like an instant. Without meaning for the image, there were no affective experience about the image. So the question then becomes, do viewers of images create meaning for images through a lengthy cognitive process, or by some other means?

Jenssen (2009:144) suggests that viewers of images see with their whole bodies by feeling. Throughout this thesis, I have referred to these raw feelings throughout the human body as "affective experience." The affect in this experience is not a side-effect of cognition. Slovic (2004:311) showed in his discussion of risk analysis that affect is an important and rational way that people interact with the world faster than cognition. He presents affect as an essential aspect of human decision making. Thus, since viewers are seeing images via affect, they are able to interact with the image by the same means, allowing them to come to decisions about the image quickly without drawn-out cognition.

The interpretation, the recognition of the worlds the interpretation suggested, and the connecting to or deflection of these worlds are all done by means of affect. Upon becoming aware of the image, viewers "see" immediately by feeling. They interpret the image using what they perceive in it, what they have heard about it, and what they might know from personal experience, with their subjectivities as the foundation. In the case of connecting, they *feel* that their interpretation of the image suggests a world that matches the world they are invested in promoting. They then interact with the image, expressing their experience of it and describing the meaning that they earlier created for the image.

In the case of deflecting, they *feel* that the image and narratives associated with the image suggest a world that clashes with the world they are invested in promoting. In order to defend the world they are invested in, they reject the suggested world, the narratives associated with the image, and the image itself. Because there is nothing meaningful or valid to them in the image, they avoid expressions of passionate affect in favor of unmoved indifference.

Affect makes it possible for viewers to interpret an image and determine whether to connect to or deflect it almost instantly. Viewers' interpretations are based in their subjectivity. Connecting or deflecting is determined by whether or not the world suggested by this interpretation matches the world promoted by their subjectivity. Thus,

affect enables viewers to make nearly immediate determinations about an image that are based in their subjectivity. This is the relationship between subjectivity and affective experience that this thesis sought to understand.

The basis for this ability to "feel" images lies in human social faculty to see/feel who they are in relation to their surroundings and other people. In the vernacular, this is often associated with the "gut" as "instinct." Slovic (2004:311) used the example of being approached by a stranger on a sidewalk. One does not run through a checklist of reasons to trust or not trust the person approaching; instead one can decide almost instantly if the person approaching is dangerous. Though these feelings often biased (as were the participants' feelings concerning images), they are essential for survival. They allow people to quickly determine how they should behave in specific situations, who they can trust, and what would happen in response to what they do and say.

These conclusions have implications for the field of Anthropology. This thesis reflects on how this field conceives of the perspectives of individuals from within cultures that inform Anthropological research. Ethnography especially involves participant observation on the part of the researcher with an emphasis on the viewpoints of informants. The researcher and their informants work to cross the gap between their different subjective perspectives of the world. My conclusions show just how wide this gap is; both parties experience very different affect based on complex, contextual, and constantly transforming subjectivities. However, by coming to understand the nature of this gap in subjectivity and experience can better equip Anthropologists and the participants that they partner with to cross it.

The conclusions of this thesis also contribute to literature on "witnessing" and have important implications specifically for international human rights. There are numerous studies pertaining to the effectiveness of imagery for the elicitation of strong affective experiences from viewers in the international community (Sliwinkski 2011; Zelizer 1998). The subjectivity of experience presented in this thesis challenges the idea that viewers from completely different cultures can be moved by such imagery and that this movement can lead them to act in the interest of those depicted, and it is certainly not the first to do so (Torchin 2012).

This thesis has grasped how viewers can recognize quickly where they stand and where what they are viewing stands in relation to them. This establishment of who the viewer is also establishes who the viewer is not. Promoting the worlds that they are invested in and rejecting worlds that other people are invested in generates a "battle of meaning." These differing perspectives and goals can group people into "us and them," drawing battle-lines and progressing battles of meaning into battles that divide and harm people. However, as Jenssen (2009:144) suggested, seeing is accomplished by the whole body: through feeling. Seeing the "otherness" of someone with a vastly different perspective solidifies them as different from you, but also provides a basis for *feeling* a common unity. Perhaps, by coming to a deeper understanding of how people see the world differently, this assertion of what makes them unique can lead to an acceptance of difference and recognition of common unity.

## 3. Suggestions for Further Research

This thesis made use of a participatory photo elicitation method similar to what Harper presented (2002:13). Participatory research projects such as this are especially useful, as they encourage collaboration with participants and elevate them into a position of authority as informants. Photo elicitation is valuable for participatory research, as it encourages the empowered participants to discuss things that they, as someone intimately familiar with the topic, would have otherwise taken for granted.

This thesis applied photo elicitation in a unique fashion by asking participants to consider images attached to a period of political and social change. Social movements oblige people to identify themselves within the movement and in relation to each other in very pronounced ways and produce images that are interpreted by means of these identities. This makes social movements a fruitful context for projects making use of participatory photo elicitation. Research can be done in this fashion to gain understandings of how and why people define themselves, organize into groups, consider "the other," and defend themselves and their groups from these "others."

Because of language limitations, this thesis did not have access to the perspectives of the lower class majority in Egypt. One of the most notable aspects of the Egyptian Revolution was the involvement of people from a wide variety of walks-of-life, including

the very poor and very rich. However, since the removal of Mubarak, many believe that the rift between the well-off and destitute is growing. A photo elicitation project could compare people from two particular spaces, for example, wealthy businessmen in a suburb and poor mechanics in a car shop. Such a project could contribute to our understanding of how people interact while in their spaces, how distinctly different stakes lead to different interpretations, what different themes these distinct groups would fixate on, and what these two groups would have in common in their consideration of images from the Revolution.

Avoidance of certain affective experiences was a central theme of the participants' deflection of images. To what extent was this behavior especially pronounced or important in Egypt? A project dealing entirely with avoidance as a culture-bound form of resistance could open up new understandings of opposition and compliance in particular cultures. An ethnographic study of power, agency, and freedom in Egyptian culture would be informative, perhaps contrasted with what Asad discusses concerning these ideas in the modern secular world (2003:68).

Most of the participants in this thesis were not active members of organized groups. A photo elicitation project could be undertaken with participants from particular organized groups, such as the *Ultras Al Ahly* football club or the Muslim Brotherhood. A good deal could be learned about why people defend groups that they feel they belong to, what they perceive as threats to this group, and how exactly they go about defending the group from images they believe are threatening.

Of course, Egypt's revolution is not the only period of political and social change that could be considered by this method. Large social movements usually create emotionally impactful images that members of that society will have a variety of perspectives about. A photo elicitation project considering a different country's social movement could be informative. Comparisons between the considerations of participants in my project and this project could be valuable as well. Shweder (1985:182) and Thamm's (1992:649) assertions about the culturally defined nature of emotions could be explored by such a comparison. Additionally, Thamm's emphasis on social structures deterministic relationship with people's feelings could be critiqued.

As Harper (2002:13) pointed out, the images in these projects do not necessarily need to be taken by someone else. Much could be learned if a version of photo elicitation was done while a social movement is still in progress by someone who could freely partake in the protests. Some of the strongest themes in this thesis' interviews had to do with participants' descriptions of protests. The differences between their considerations of these spaces were notable. For instance, Haisam described chaos and mindless destruction while Tamer described defined battle-lines and clear distinctions between friend and foe. Thus, a photo elicitation project about the subjective perspectives of these spaces would be valuable. The researcher could go to a protest with different participants and allow the participants to take pictures of the space. This method is similar to Radley and Taylor's (2003:77) research in a hospital, during which he tasked patients with taking pictures to represent the spaces they inhabited in the hospital ward.

Such a project could learn a great deal about how the participants' subjectivities led them to interact with the space differently. Each person interprets what they see in the protest differently based on who they are. The images they took could be analyzed in detail to consider exactly how the participants chose to frame each shot. The researcher could also meet with participants and enlist them in this analysis. In addition to assisting with the analysis, considering the photo with the participants could grant a wealth of knowledge about how participants chose to represent themselves in their analysis.  In the interest of participant observation, the researcher could themselves spend time taking pictures within the protest.

The context of the interviews proved to be especially important during the fieldwork for this thesis. For instance, the closer that the conversations were to the protests on the 30th of June, the more participants gravitated towards this issue. It would be informative to enlist Egyptian participants for a project similar to mine again several years later. The researcher could establish participants' subjectivities and then ask them to submit images they associate with events from the distant past. Participants would no longer be invested in the outcome of change, as the outcomes would seem to have come to pass. Without the battle of meaning directly affecting their lives, would their interpretation lack resolve? Such a continuation of this thesis could learn a great deal

about how memory is affected by the current context and the ever changing and transforming nature of human subjectivities.

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# VI. Appendix

**Appendix A: Description of Image Sample**

In order to provide a description of the thirty-six images discussed throughout this thesis, I have provided the following guide. The left-hand column gives a short title for the image and the name of the participant who submitted it. The right-hand column gives a brief description of the image and the date and context it is associated with. The center column provides the "codes" that I refer to when citing the image. A single letter was given to each participant, with the first letter referring to the first participant to join the project, and so on. The code's number indicates which of that participant's images is being referred to. For example, "B" refers to Mohamed, who was the second participant to join the project, and "1" indicates the first of the images he submitted. When discussing the image of the 'Blue Bra Woman' that Mohamed submitted, I cite it with the code (B 1). The participants were assigned the following letters:[9]

| A | B | C | D | E | G | H |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amina | Mohamed | Cala | Dalia | Eyad | Gamal | Haisam |

| I | J | K | M | N | O | Q |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Iman | George | Karim | Mary | Nader | Osama | Tamer |

The images are here categorized chronologically by the time periods they were associated with by participants of this project. These categories do not always reflect the time period in which the image was created. In many cases, images were created before a time period and not widely distributed until much later. For example, famous images of people who died during protests were taken while they were alive, oftentimes years

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[9] The three participants assigned the letters F, L, and P were unable to complete the interview process and are not included in this thesis.

before the Revolution began. In these cases I have placed the images within the time period they were used, as this was the context in which participants were placing them during our interviews. On a few occasions, participants associated the same image with different time periods. In these cases, I have simply placed the images within the time period they were most often related with, so as to provide the reader with an introduction to the norms while still presenting the exceptions in the above chapters.

| BEFORE 25 JANUARY | | |
|---|---|---|
| TITLES AND SUBMITTERS | CODE | IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS |
| "Mubarak and Sadat praying"<br><br>Submitted by Amina | A 1 | This image depicts former president Anwar Sadat and his vice president, Hosni Mubarak, on their knees in the desert praying with US Trade Ambassador Robert Strauss and several other men. It was taken in 1979 during a visit from the Ambassador (Doherty 1979). |
| "Cairo by night"<br><br>Submitted by Amina | A 2 | This is a professionally taken time-lapse picture of downtown Cairo at night that can be found on a variety of tourism websites. |
| "Comparison of perspectives on the same image"<br><br>Submitted by Mohamed | B 4 | This image depicts two cropped and one un-cropped version of the same picture, revealing that this cropping significantly affects the picture's impression. The un-cropped version shows a white soldier giving an unarmed Arab soldier a drink from a canteen, while another white soldier appears to be aiming a gun at the Arab soldier's head. Text at the bottom of the image says, "How the Media can manipulate our viewpoint." Details concerning the original, unedited image are unknown; this version has been included because it was to some extent utilized by Egyptians during the Egyptian Revolution. |
| "Post-Mortem Khalid Said"<br><br>Submitted by Dalia | D 1 | This image is of the post-mortem face of Khalid Said, who was beaten to death by policemen in Alexandria in June of 2011 (Wedeman 2010). |

| THE 18 DAYS OF PROTEST | | |
|---|---|---|
| TITLES AND SUBMITTERS | CODE | IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS |
| "Ahmed Basouni"<br><br>Submitted by preliminary research | Z 2 | This is an image of a smiling, 31 year old Ahmed Basouni, who was killed during protests on the night of 28 January 2011, also known as the "Friday of Rage." |
| "Cartoon of | Z 3 | This image is a cartoon of Khalid Said removing a tiny President |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Khalid Said removing Mubarak"

Submitted by preliminary research | | Mubarak by the collar of his suit. Said is drawn in a grey sweatshirt with "#JAN25" on his chest. |
| "Police officers eating KFC"

Submitted by Mohamed | B 6 | This image depicts a row of police officers in black riot gear eating from boxes marked "KFC." |
| "Tahrir Square filled with people"

Submitted by Cala | C 1 | This image depicts Tahrir Square at night, filled with people, tents, and banners. It was taken from atop a building, looking down on the crowd. |
| "Praying protesters sprayed during the 'Bridge Battle'"

Submitted by Cala, Osama, and Tamer | C 2
O 2
Q 1 | This image depicts a crowd of protesters and a crowd of police filling opposite sides of the *Qasr al Nil* bridge on the 28th of January, 2011. The protesters directly in front of the police are kneeling as if praying, and a stream of water from behind the police is hitting them. |
| "Man on camel in the 'Camel Battle'"

Submitted by Cala | C 6 | This image depicts a man on a camel riding through a crowd of people in Tahrir Square during the "Camel Battle" on 2 February 2011. |
| "A memorial to martyrs in Tahrir Square"

Submitted by Dalia | D 3 | This image depicts a memorial on the pavement in Tahrir Square. It includes flowers, Egyptian flags, and framed pictures of various people who died in the beginning of the 18 Days of Protest. |
| "Smoke rising from Tahrir Square"

Submitted by Eyad | E 1 | This image depicts a pillar of smoke rising from the direction of Tahrir Square in the first days of the 18 Days of Protest. It appears to have been taken from a balcony overlooking the city. |
| "Protester in orange vest"

Submitted by Eyad | E 4 | This image depicts a man in Tahrir Square wearing an orange vest, a facemask, and a pot on his head. |
| "Protesters carrying an army officer" | E 5 | This image depicts people in Tahrir Square carrying an officer from the Egyptian military while a large crowd of people surrounds them. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Submitted by Eyad | | |
| "Front page of '*Al Masry Yum*' newspaper."<br><br>Submitted by Cala and Gamal | G 5 | This image is a digital scan of the front page of the newspaper "*Al Masry Yom.*" In Arabic, the headline reads, "Martyrs of the 25th of January Revolution," and "The Flower that opened in the gardens of Egypt." Eleven pictures of the faces of those who died during the 18 Days of Protest are situated throughout this image; ten of them are men and one is a woman. |
| "Video of a man standing in front of a police truck"<br><br>Submitted by Gamal | Gv1 | This video begins with a crowd of protesters running down a street as the police approach. A police truck pursues them, but stops when a man stands in its path. The man remains in place as the police truck sprays him with water. Several other protesters come to stand alongside this man, and eventually the truck pushes them all down the street. |
| "Army tank on a highway"<br><br>Submitted by Haisam | H 3 | This image depicts an army tank on a highway in Cairo at the beginning of the 18 Days of Protest when the military was first deployed. |
| "Burnt remains of the NDP building"<br>Submitted by Haisam | H 7 | This image depicts the N.D.P. (National Democratic Party) building in downtown Cairo after it was thoroughly burned. The N.D.P. was Mubarak's political party. |
| "Protest posters depicting those who died in protests."<br><br><br>Submitted by Haisam | H 13 | This image depicts a crowd of people facing the same direction and holding large protest banners. Two of the banners display images of Rahma Khodier and Mustafa El-Sawi, who died during the 18 Days of Protest. |
| "Video of the 'Bridge Battle'"<br><br>Submitted by Tamer | Qv1 | This video begins with a pickup truck driving down a street while the men in the back are throwing rocks. The truck passes several men who run away in its wake. The truck attempts to turn, but stops at a curb. The men in the truck are then assailed by a crowd of people on foot. The video then cuts to the aftermath, during which several of the men are dragged away and one remains limp on the ground next to the truck. This was part of the fighting on the night after the "Camel Battle" on 2 February 2011. |
| "Copts holding hands beside Muslims in prayer"<br><br>Submitted by Tamer | Q 3 | This image depicts a man holding someone's hand in front of a crowd of Muslims bowing to pray. A Coptic cross is clearly visible tattooed on his wrist. |

| SCAF'S LEADERSHIP | | |
|---|---|---|
| TITLES AND SUBMITTERS | CODE | IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS |
| "An image of the 'Blue Bra Woman'"<br><br>Submitted by Mohamed | B 1 | This image depicts several police officers gathered around a woman lying on the ground with her shirt ripped open, revealing a bright blue bra. One of the police is kicking her in the stomach with his boot (Zayed 2011). |
| "Anas Mohly holding an Al Ahly flag."<br><br>Submitted by Cala | C 8 | This image depicts Anas Mohly holding the red flag of the Egyptian professional football team "*Al Ahly*." He is standing in a stadium, with the football field behind him. This boy was reportedly killed at the age of 15 during the "Port Said Incident." |
| "Eyad's art project 'What I would do if I were president'"<br><br>Submitted by Eyad | E 10 | This image depicts two posters pasted to a wall that say "What I would do if I were president" in Arabic. Someone has drawn a man with a speech bubble in Arabic. Eyad reported that this is a picture of an art project he created and distributed to the Egyptian public in Cairo. He asked random people to finish the sentence and explain how they would lead Egypt. |
| "Video of the Blue Bra Woman being attacked"<br><br>Submitted by Gamal | Gv2 | This video begins with a crowd of black uniformed police officers running towards a crowd of protesters. In the fray, a woman and a man fall behind and are set upon by the police. The man is seen struggling against the police who are beating him with sticks, but the woman lays still, apparently unconscious, with her shirt ripped open and her bright blue bra exposed. The police drag, kick, and eventually cover her. This video does not have sound from the original filming, but rather is set to a song from the movie "*3asal Eswed (Black Honey).*" The lyrics lament the way that Egyptians treat foreigners with respect, but are cruel to other Egyptians. |
| "Police officer with a gun"<br><br>Submitted by Iman | I 2 | This image depicts a police officer holding a gun, standing in a street with several other police officers in the background facing away. This picture was taken from a video of a police officer being congratulated for accurately shooting protesters in the eyes ("Egyptian 'Eye-Sniper'" 2013). |
| "People waiting in Cairo train station after Port Said Incident"<br><br>Submitted by Iman | I 4 | This image depicts a crowd of people filling the boarding platforms inside the Cairo train station. Some have climbed on top of the train that is parked in the center of the picture and others are standing on the tracks. These people were waiting for a train from Port Said to arrive after the "Port Said Incident" on 1 February 2012. |
| "Coffins being carried away"<br><br>Submitted by Mary | M 3 | This image depicts people carrying a coffin while a crowd watches. Many people have their hands raised towards the coffin. They appear to be gathered in a very large building, most likely a church. |

| MORSI'S PRESIDENCY | | |
|---|---|---|
| TITLES AND SUBMITTERS | CODE | IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS |
| "Mohammed el Guidi holding a sign" <br><br> Submitted by preliminary research | Z 5 | This image depicts Mohammed el Guidi smiling into the camera, holding a sign that says, "*Ana mish baltagi (I am not a thug)*." El Guidi was arrested by police at an anti-Morsi protest on 27 January 2013 and found dead several days later at a hospital. |
| "The 'Potato Boy'" <br><br> Submitted by Amina | A 3 | This image depicts 12-year-old Omar Salah Omran looking into the camera. Omran sold sweet potatoes from a cart, and was accidently shot in the chest by a police officer in a street near downtown Cairo. |
| "Hamada Saber in the street" <br><br> Submitted by Mohamed | B 3 | This image depicts a naked man sitting in a street with several men in police uniforms standing around him. The man's name is Hamada Saber. This picture was taken from live video footage aired on Al-Hayat satellite channel on the night of 1 February 2013. |
| "Man with a bloody face" <br><br> Submitted by Cala | C 7 | This image depicts a shirtless man with blood running down his face and into his mouth. He is moving down a street in a small crowd of people. |
| "A Crashed Train" <br><br> Submitted by Cala | C 10 | This image depicts the wreckage of two train cars on railroad tracks. There are several men walking around the wreckage and a crane in the background. |
| "Woman attacking a man in a crowd" <br><br> Submitted by Iman | I 7 | This image depicts a confrontation between a woman and a man in a crowd of people. The woman is shouting with her fist extended and a man is holding her back. Another man is backing away from her while holding his head. This photo was taken during a protest against Morsi in front of the Ministry of Culture headquarters. The woman is activist Rasha Azab and the man is Muslim Brotherhood member Ahmed Al-Mogheer ("Egyptian Prosecutors…" 2013). |
| "Altered image of Morsi kissing Angela Merkel" Submitted by Nader | N 4 | This image is of two pictures, shown side-by-side, revealing that one of them has been edited. The top picture portrays German Chancellor Angela Merkel leaning forward to kiss the French President Nicolas Sarkozy. The picture below this is clearly the same as the image of the German Chancellor leaning in for a kiss, but the French President has been replaced by Mohammed Morsi, so it appears that he is about to kiss the German Chancellor. |
| "Altered image of muscular Morsi with soldiers" <br><br> Submitted by Nader | N 5 | This image depicts three very large, muscular men in camouflage, two of whom are wearing masks. The man in the middle is shirtless and has been edited to have Morsi's face. |